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LIVERPOOL NONCONFORMITY

(1786 - 1914)

IAN SELLERS

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CHAPTER ONE,

MODERN LIVERPOOL,

PHYSICAL GROWTH AND THE DISSENTING NUCLEUS

There is sound historical reason for beginning an account of any aspect of the development of modern Liverpool in the later 1780s. Not only was this period a ^{breathing} space between two great wars which profoundly affected its growth as a port: it marks in addition the end of an epoch wherein the town, despite its rapid eighteenth century growth was still compact enough for most leading citizens to know and recognise each other, to possess some community sense, and to feel pride in an historical tradition which stretched back to the reign of King John. Much of course was changing rapidly in this town of 56,000 inhabitants. The development of commerce with North America, the Industrial Revolution in North West England, the building of canals into the Lancashire hinterland, the wars of the later eighteenth century, the activities of the privateers, the acquisition of colonies, above all the phenomenal growth of the slave trade⁽¹⁾ had already enabled Liverpool to outdistance Bristol in all branches of commerce. Rum, cotton and sugar came into the port from the West Indies, fish from Newfoundland, tobacco and iron from the newly independent United States, timber and linen from the Baltic countries, wines and fruit from southern Europe, flax and foodstuffs from Ulster, while Lancashire cotton goods, Cheshire salt and Staffordshire pottery accounted for most of her export trade⁽²⁾. Even at this early date the town's native industries were rapidly becoming subordinate to and dependent on her commerce: rope-walks, shipyards, sugar-boiling, oil-refining were now the all-important adjuncts to her commercial enterprise⁽³⁾. The old craft industries, watchmaking and pottery, were not long to survive the concentration of her entire economic life on the port: both probably reached their height about 1790 and then began to decline. Even ancillary industries involving the processing of imports like wheat, sugar and chemicals tended during the nineteenth century to be dispersed over a wider area, or to be confined within the town rather uncomfortably to the vicinity of Vauxhall Road. Here the close juxtaposition of odiferous chemical works was later to arouse unfavourable comment from worthy citizens who failed to realise that in the new industrial towns of the north, this was a normal and accepted feature of urban living.

Not of course that Liverpool even in 1786 was more healthy or more sanitary than its neighbours in the Lancashire cotton belt. The scandal of overcrowding and cellar-dwellings was already notorious, even though

as early as 1780 the Cor^oration had applied for its first Improvement Commission, while Liverpool merchants still tended to reside above their offices in the town centre. Here again however the pattern of things was to change dramatically within the next twenty years as the wealthy moved out to St. Anne's Street, Rodney Street, Mosslake Fields or to the spacious, windmill-studded Everton hills, leaving their town residences to be filled to suffocation with desperately poor immigrants from Ireland and elsewhere.

The character and appearance of the town evoked widely divergent comments from occasional visitors. Samuel Curwen, an American loyalist, disliked 'the long, narrow, crooked, dirty streets' wherein he scarcely saw 'a well dressed person' ⁽⁴⁾. John Wesley on the contrary (who is perhaps not unbiased for in Liverpool he was never mobbed and was generally allowed to preach in the parish church of St. Thomas) found the town 'one of the neatest and best built in England', and the people 'the most mild and courteous I ever saw in a seaport town', whose 'friendly behaviour to the Jews, Papists and Methodists, so called, in their midst' could not be too highly commended ⁽⁵⁾. Clearly however Liverpool even in 1786 bore an odd, sprawling appearance, for though the old Pool had just been filled in, and Whitechapel and Paradise Street were being built over its site, Lime Street (still a leafy country lane with fields stretching away to the north) joined two distinct communities, the south, stretching from Mount Pleasant down to the river with Duke Street and Bold Street already in course of construction, and the north, where development stretched from London Road to Scotland Road and to the slopes of Everton hill. (Building on the old town fields between Scotland Road and the river had not yet begun).

One additional feature of the town at this time calls for comment: its continuing remoteness and isolation. Extending towards the village of Bootle in the north and Garston in the south to the great estates of Lords Derby and Sefton in the east was a stretch of bleak and uninviting countryside where highwaymen still lurked, interspersed with scattered villages and hamlets such as Kirkdale, Aintree, Walton, Woolton, Wavertree and Childwall, settlements linked for the most part by miry tracks. Only in 1765 had the road to Warrington been made passable, and only in 1784 had a mailcoach which could accommodate a mere four

passengers been introduced to ply between Liverpool and the outside world. The canals were by now busy, bustling even, with activity, but to travel by road from the Lancashire hinterland to the town of Liverpool could still be an uncomfortably risky adventure⁽⁶⁾.

During the next fifty years Liverpool was to become England's most notorious 'boom town', wherein fortunes could be made and unmade overnight, a seething agglomeration proverbial for its crass materialism, indifference to cultural values, and unthinking political reactionism, all three of which ingredients probably went into John Bright's famous designation of the port as 'that monstrous thing'⁽⁷⁾. Viewed from any angle its sheer physical growth is astonishing. By 1800 the population had sprung up to 77,000, by 1851 it was 403,000, by 1891, 652,000, and by 1911, 753,000. As the line of docks extended northwards and southwards vast numbers of immigrants flocked into the town which sprawled further and further out into the countryside, swallowing up the immediately outlying villages, denuding of population those like Childwall and Aintree which were too near and yet too far from the city to be any longer economically viable units.

By the mid-nineteenth century the population in the centre of the town was beginning to shrink as it was given over increasingly to commercial purposes, but the Irish poor had already claimed the Scotland Road area as their own preserve, while in nearby Everton the wealthy merchants were in full flight as rows of terraced houses advanced further into their hillside retreats. Edge Hill, Walton and Wavertree were in 1850 still spatially divorced from the city, but were linked up to it both occupationally and socially, and were soon to be absorbed by the unceasing outward movement of population. Bootle likewise was growing rapidly with middle-class housing around the old land-girt village, and poorer dwellings clustering round the newly constructed docks (the two communities had yet to meet).

In the south mean streets were beginning to spread over Toxteth Park, but Grassendale and Mossley Hill were already developing as exclusively residential areas, while Garston village was not only emerging as a port in its own right, but was attracting labour to its new dockside industries, notably the salt works⁽⁸⁾.

This spectacular growth of population went of course hand in hand

with a phenomenal increase in trade. The tonnage handled by the port doubled between 1815 & 1830, doubled again between 1830 and 1845, and yet again between 1845 and 1860. Though Liverpool's trade with the Continent of Europe actually declined, new markets were opened up with the Americas (particularly after the liberation of the Spanish colonies), and with the Far East, following the abrogation of the East India Company's charter. Even in the 1860s, 70s and 80s when the trade boom slowed down considerably, the inexorable physical growth of the city continued. Toxteth Park was now completely built over, and Liverpool was joined by a continuous line of development to the Dingle. In the north the summits of Edge Hill and Everton Hill had now been reached, and the city was expending down the slopes beyond into Smithdown, Fairfield, Kirkdale, Walton and Anfield. Much of this later nineteenth century development, especially in Kirkdale, Everton, Edge Hill and Toxteth Park was workingclass from the start, and consisted of rows of dull, terraced houses: in other areas a powerful village nucleus, often with native industries, as at Walton, Fazakerley and Old Swan, survived to give the area a more complex social structure. In just a few instances there were bold attempts at town planning: in Fairfield for example there was laid out in the 1850s a skilfully planned estate of 573 houses, each with a neat garden plot. But in general, as Irish Catholic immigrants moved into the very centre of the city, it was the Protestant working class which removed into the new areas of development, while the middle classes retreated yet further southwards into Aigburth, eastwards into West Derby or northwards into Crosby⁽⁹⁾. Only Abercromby Square survived in the centre of the city as 'Liverpool's Bloomsbury', an area of large, middle-class houses interspersed with better-class artizan property.

When in the 1890s and 1900s trade suddenly began once again to flourish, with the development of new markets on the West coast of Africa and in Australia, and of new exports like chemicals and machinery, this powerful economic trend coincided with the introduction of the electric tramways and the consequently greater mobility of the population to stimulate urban development still further: the periphery of the city was being pushed out remorselessly in all directions when the First World War began.

The social structure of nineteenth century Liverpool was conditioned by the circumstances of its rapid physical growth. There was, as visitors

usually remarked, an almost complete absence of 'manufactories', both the small, intimate factory units of the Birmingham type and the great mills of the Lancashire manufacturing towns. Industry in Liverpool was essentially service industry and the occupational structure of the town reflected its dependence on the port. Thomas Armstrong's fictional portrait in 'King Cotton' of a town consisting of unskilled labourers, petty clerks, wandering fortune hunters and a merchant oligarchy is not too wide of the mark. Certainly the twin pillars of a healthy civic radicalism, a large, powerful and intelligent body of skilled workers and a socially conscious managerial class were both lacking⁽¹⁰⁾, and this circumstance was to affect the life of the town in at least two ways. Firstly it rendered Liverpool Liberalism effete and aimless, the political plaything of a handful of intellectual dilettantes: secondly, while not seriously affecting the numerical strength of Nonconformity (which was only marginally weaker here than in other cities) it was to provide an effective barrier to the emergence of a distinctive Political Dissent. But here of course other factors entered into the situation: the racial antagonism between the Protestant working classes and the Irish Catholics whose numbers and abysmally low standards threatened not only their employment but their whole mode of life, and Ulster Orangemen whose militant political Protestantism forbade the appearance of such a harmful irrelevance as a politically-oriented Nonconformity. In the grand Protestant-Catholic vendetta which constituted Liverpool politics for much of the nineteenth century, English Nonconformity had no part to play other than to observe a discreet silence⁽¹¹⁾.

There is one other circumstance, less well-known than the above, which accounts not only for the unyielding Toryism of the town, but for much of its reputation for political passivity, lack of initiative in concerns other than the purely local⁽¹²⁾, and blinkered absorption in its own affairs. This is the peculiar influence exercised in a town such as this by wealth and property, whether in the hands of individuals such as the Seftons, Salisburys and Derbys and the merchant princes or of commercial concerns such as the shipping companies. There could be little open confrontation of political principles in a city honeycombed by interests such as these. Liverpool society was built on a nexus of complicated business relationships, no one knowing where the influence of a particular company or individual began or ended. Independent action was thus hamstrung from

the very start - the householder feared dispossession, the clerk loss of position, the shopkeeper diminution of trade. In these circumstances religious strife was not merely more exhilarating than the political variety - it could also be far less inimical to one's economic position and social prospects.

Nineteenth century Liverpool was then a new creation, and the ecclesiastical system which undergirded the city and gave to it what sense of moral purpose it possessed was in like manner largely the work of the same newcomers who rose to the forefront in commercial enterprise and civic life. All the major Protestant denominations, except the orthodox Presbyterians, were represented in the Liverpool of 1786, and their respective churches were thus the nucleus of their nineteenth century achievement. But, save in the case of the Unitarians, the families which provided their lay leadership in the Victorian age are not to be found in Liverpool prior to the turn of the century. So quickly however did they achieve social recognition, and so readily were their churches accepted as an indigenous part of the ecclesiastical scene, that the fact of their late arrival was, and is, all too easily forgotten.

Of the town's seven Dissenting chapels, by far the best attended, most opulent and socially influential were the two old Presbyterian chapels in Benn's Garden and Kaye Street⁽¹³⁾. Both were old foundations, the former dating from 1727, the latter from 1707. The Rev. Robert Lewin, minister at Benn's Garden from 1770 to 1816, was despite his classical and mathematical learning probably the most undistinguished man ever to hold so important an office⁽¹⁴⁾. He played little part in civic life and avoided theological controversy, having himself reached an Arian position, but refusing to move further leftwards into Unitarianism⁽¹⁵⁾.

Parson Lewin, a familiar figure in bag-wig and gown, ministered to a 'small, simple-minded' and already closely-intermarried community⁽¹⁶⁾ which still treasured the gracious intimacy of the eighteenth century meeting house. The members would arrive each Sabbath morning in their coaches which were then parked in the streets around the chapel. Lewin would preach, warn backsliders from the pulpit, pray for his many members on the high seas, and catechise the children in the aisles. He would then share his dinner in the vestry with those who had travelled

in to service from a distance, after which a short afternoon meeting was held (evening service did not replace this arrangement till 1822 - the streets of Liverpool on a Sunday night were no place for genteel ladies of the Presbyterian way). Kaye Street, it appears, had both a larger congregation and was more formal in character, for here the aristocracy sat round the walls and in the front pews, the democracy being relegated to the body of the chapel⁽¹⁶⁾. Its minister since 1777 had been the formidable John Yates, thirty-three years old in 1786, but already one of the wealthiest men in Liverpool, for after only a few months in the town he had married, much against her family's wishes, Elizabeth Bostock, daughter of John Ashton of Woolton Hall⁽¹⁷⁾. Relying on his wife's capital he had bought up large tracts of land in Toxteth Park and sold them for development⁽¹⁸⁾. He had also, despite the fact that as a Nonconformist minister he was debarred by law from so doing, engaged in commercial speculations, some of a rather shady character, in particular a lucrative tobacco deal of 1776⁽¹⁹⁾. So well known in fact were his business dealings that the Monthly Repository in its obituary notice was led to defend their legitimate nature 'as enabling his children to maintain that station in society to which he has been led to habituate them'⁽²⁰⁾.

This wealth enabled Parson Yates to support a magnificent household at Dingle Head which attracted the attention of thieves and was on one occasion actually besieged by highwaymen. It was nonetheless a powerful cultural centre, the meeting place of the Octonian Society, consisting of the eight leading Unitarian intellectuals of the town, and the scene of numerous congregational outings where the Rational Dissenters could exhort each other to benevolence and cultivate their 'social affections'. A large and well-stocked library which contained among other items an unexpurgated Arabian Nights (Parson Yates had an odd sense of humour and was always rather dandyish, not to say outrageous, in his habits⁽²¹⁾) had led this remarkable cleric to a theological position well to the left of Lewin's, though once again there was a marked reticence to express publicly his private convictions⁽²²⁾. A child of the Enlightenment he represented Christianity as 'the one grand, beautiful and consistent plan for the advancement of human nature to the highest degree of virtue on earth, and the greatest glory and felicity in heaven'⁽²³⁾.

The families which attended the two historic Presbyterian chapels were not now as exclusively of Scots or Ulster origin as had once been the case⁽²⁴⁾. The traditional and yet changing social structure of the community is reflected in the occupations of the seat-holders in both buildings about this time⁽²⁵⁾. 'Merchants' (a vaguely elastic term) predominate but there is a good admixture of masters, mariners, book keepers, booksellers, carpenters, cabinet makers, wollen merchants, linen drapers, sail, watch and clock makers. Some families however stood out prominently among the rest.

At Kaye Street the leading men were now Joseph France, merchant of Cable Street, and head of the house of France, Poole and Fletcher, who with £500 won by playing whist over a keg of rum had proceeded to become the leading Jamaica merchant in the town⁽²⁶⁾, Joseph Brooks, merchant, who died in 1788 and whose family subsequently conformed (his great nephew was the famous Archdeacon Brooks of Liverpool), Thomas Avison, surgeon and secretary to the newly founded Liverpool Dispensary, William Harvey, builder, the father of five sons destined to play a distinguished rôle in the politics of the early nineteenth century city and Thomas Fletcher, the scion of a very old Liverpool family, apprenticed in 1782 to France, and taken on as a partner in 1789 with money loaned by Mathew Nicholson, a fellow Presbyterian (an interesting and typical example this, of the social value to a young man of ambition of attendance at an opulent chapel)⁽²⁷⁾.

Contemporary with these at Benn's Garden were men such as J.R. Freme, tobacco merchant and radical politician⁽²⁸⁾, Thomas Holt, glass manufacturer and merchant⁽²⁹⁾, Thomas Mather, corn and hop merchant, a relative of the New England Mathers, Thomas Booth, father of a distinguished progeny who had come to Liverpool from rural Lancashire in 1767, set himself up as a corn factor, and was now the most outspoken representative of the Liverpool corn-trade⁽³⁰⁾, Eaton Hall, enameller of Pitt Street, whose son William was to achieve distinction through an apprenticeship to the Heywoods, Unitarian bankers, Charles Holland, merchant, whose family hailed from Knutsford, William Thornley merchant who likewise had recently migrated to Liverpool from East Cheshire⁽³¹⁾, Robert Preston, another newcomer, this time from Pilling, whose famous Jamaica rum had not yet made its appearance in England⁽³²⁾, William Durning, a member of a very old Liverpool family, another liquor merchant, soon to be in partnership with Edmund Lewin, his pastor's son⁽³³⁾, and Saul McDowal,

said to be the last slave-trader in the Presbyterian community. In both congregations were many young men who had still to make their name, including a youthful attorney by the name of William Roscoe at Benn's Garden, and a newly arrived Scots physician at Kay Street, Dr James Currie.

Two of the great Presbyterian families of Liverpool have not been mentioned as they were now on the point of severing their connections with the town. The Nicholsons, a family of Scottish extraction, had added wealth and dignity to the community in which they had settled, and were still in the 1780s engaged in the import of linen from Ireland and cotton and tobacco from America - they were however about to transfer their business interests to Manchester and are hereafter little heard of in Liverpool⁽³⁴⁾. The Heywoods also, descendants of the great Oliver Heywood, one of the Ejected, had accumulated a fortune in eighteenth century Liverpool, in the slave trade, privateering and general merchandise. In 1773 however they had gone over to banking, and their great House in Manchester was opened in 1788. Henceforth the Liverpool Bank in Castle Street was a smaller, subordinate branch, and only one member of the family needed to reside locally to look after it⁽³⁵⁾.

The two hisorians of Dissent, Bogue and Bennet, rhapsodising on the Nonconformity of this period, defined its leading men as the 'bones, muscles and sinews of civil society'⁽³⁶⁾. Certainly in Liverpool commercial life would have been far poorer without them, and so too would the cultural and philanthropic institutions of the town, for already the heterodox Dissenters were the financial backbone of such institutions as the Dispensary and the Circulating Library⁽³⁷⁾. Soon too they were to take the initiative in founding the Athenaeum and the Academy of Arts (1798), the Literary and Philosophical Society (1812) and the Royal Institution (1814)⁽³⁸⁾. As yet however they had few literary pretensions themselves; they were rather 'speculative, empiricist, materialistic and distrustful of a priori reasoning'⁽³⁹⁾ and though many of them, such as the Nicholsons and Harveys, made no secret of their radical political learnings, only one, Thomas Wickliffe, author of the 'Treatise on Civil and Ecclesiastical Government' (1779), a local merchant and trustee of the Blue Coat School, had as yet tried to justify their commercial enterprise in terms of a political and economic philosophy borrowed largely

from John Locke⁽⁴⁰⁾.

For a variety of reasons this Presbyterian community no longer commanded in 1786 a tithe of the political influence they had wielded earlier in the century. Time was when the seat-holders of Benn's Garden and Kay Street, who had few scruples on occasional conformity, had been elected to the Corporation without difficulty, assuming the offices of councillor, alderman and mayor⁽⁴¹⁾. In 1754 indeed for a few months one of their number, John Hardman of Allerton Hall, had represented Liverpool in the House of Commons⁽⁴²⁾. Their political influence was in fact felt nationally, for it was widely acknowledged at the time that the pressure for the repeal of the Test Acts in 1732, which had so embarrassed Walpole and led to the setting up of the Protestant Dissenting Deputies the same year, originated in Liverpool⁽⁴³⁾. But the 50s and 60s had been black decades for the local Presbyterian interest⁽⁴⁴⁾ whose nadir had probably been reached about 1763 when many of their leading members, including one minister, had conformed, and their chapels were emptying rapidly⁽⁴⁵⁾. Till the time of the French Revolution the Presbyterians were politically dumb, a spent force, so it seemed, in municipal affairs, which fact may of course help to explain the comparative lack of political comment in Liverpool during the American War of Independence, compared with the active participation of the Bristol merchants in the contemporary debate. All this time the Corporation, Whig in the early part of the century, was becoming increasingly Tory, as the links between the Corporation oligarchy and the local Anglican clergy, a particularly reactionary group of the old fashioned High Church stamp, hailing chiefly from Brazenose College, Oxford, became progressively stronger⁽⁴⁶⁾. By 1786 not a single Nonconformist had a seat in the Corporation, and the few remaining Whig members, all of them Anglicans, had, like the Tories, with few exceptions slaveowning interests⁽⁴⁷⁾. If ever the Rational Dissenters were to recover their political consciousness it would be in complete and radical opposition to the local establishment in Church and Corporation.

The two Presbyterian chapels had a status in the town so far removed from that of the less respectable Dissenting causes, that the contemporary observer may perhaps be forgiven if, as usually happened, he dismissed the other five meeting houses in a single curt sentence.

But the very fact that so far as popular religion was concerned the future lay with the Orthodox rather than the Rational Dissenters demands that more than cursory treatment be accorded to the two Baptist, one Congregational, one Quaker and one Wesleyan chapels which flourished in the town at this time.

The Baptists were the only other denomination to possess two chapels, but these had no mutual relation, other than that one had arisen by a schism from the other, proclaimed different gospels and were generally antagonistic. There had been Baptist witness in Liverpool from the 1680s at least⁽⁴⁸⁾ and a chapel in Byrom Street had been built in 1714 but it was a tiny building and the congregation, 'a small handful of the unworthy dust of Zion', as they described themselves⁽⁴⁹⁾ gradually assumed a hyper-Calvinist position as the century wore on, moving thus to one theological extreme as the Presbyterians veered to the other. From this position which threatened ultimate extinction they had been rescued by the Rev. Samuel Medley who, assuming the pastorate of Byrom Street in 1771 retained it till his death in 1799. 'Bosun' Medley, an ex-sailor who had lost a leg at Lagos Bay, was not only very popular among the seafaring community of Liverpool to whom he preached often in the open air; as a pupil of Andrew Gifford his theological position was that of a warm evangelical Calvinism which at once revitalised the decaying Baptist cause at Byrom Street. The chapel was enlarged in 1773 and completely rebuilt in 1789, by which date it was crowded to capacity, not with the kind of distinguished persons who attended the Presbyterian meetings, but with large numbers of aspiring newcomers to the town, especially from North Wales and rural Lancashire. Byrom Street was thus in 1786 as Dr Raffles described it 'the cathedral of the Baptist denomination in the northern parts'⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Not far from this historic church stood a small structure in Stanley Street, built by John Johnson, one time minister at Byrom Street but who had broken away, together with his supporters, after a protracted doctrinal dispute in 1748. Johnson, shipyard worker and theologian, who continued to minister to his small, obscure congregation till his death in 1791⁽⁵¹⁾ had worked out a variant of High Calvinism which was so distinctive, not to say egregious, that he and the churches, mainly in Cheshire and East Anglia, which subscribed to his doctrines were

recognized as a distinct sect of Johnsonian Baptists⁽⁵²⁾. But though Johnson was the revered patriarch of the denomination the Liverpool church was one of its weakest causes and, after his death, became a branch of the far stronger churches at Warford and Millington which supplied it regularly with preachers. Of all the Liverpool churches of 1786 it was by far the most outré and obscure.

Congregationalism had made a belated appearance in the town, and had arisen following the assumption of pastoral office at Toxteth Park Presbyterian Chapel in 1776 by the Rev. Hugh Anderson, an Arian but a man of accommodating temper who informed his people that if they could agree about their doctrines and inform him what they believed, then he would preach to their specification⁽⁵³⁾. This was not good enough for the evangelical section which had long chafed at the theological declension of Toxteth Park, and the lead was taken by the Mercer family of Allerton in attempting to secure a pastor of more orthodox sentiments. Forty-six members and three hundred and fifty adherents withdrew to a room in Cropper Street⁽⁵⁴⁾ and secured through the good offices of the Rev. James Scott of the Heckmondwicke Academy a pastor in the person of a student-minister, Mr David Bruce. A new chapel in Newington Fields was opened the following year, and here Bruce, a sternly orthodox young man, remained pastor till his death in 1808. His ministry did not attract large numbers, and was far from peaceful, for he rarely saw eye to eye with his most prominent lay supporter, Mr Johnathan Mercer, who desired a preacher of 'moderate sentiments', not 'a flaming bigoted Calvinist'⁽⁵⁵⁾. Nor was the secession of the very large Scots party in his congregation which in 1792 departed to build an orthodox Presbyterian chapel of their own calculated to help the Congregational cause. Nonetheless in an age of theological upset and contentiousness, Bruce had kept his fractious people together and established Newington Chapel as a recognised feature of the Dissenting life of the town.

The Society of Friends in Liverpool had possessed a meeting house in Hackins Hey since 1710, and an adjoining graveyard since 1752. Craftsmen and small merchants, the Quakers had been losing many prominent members for various reasons throughout the whole century⁽⁵⁶⁾, but had been gaining others, including a William Rathbone, sawyer, a native of Gawsorth, Cheshire, who had arrived in Liverpool in 1726 and set up as

a timber merchant⁽⁵⁷⁾. The Quakers' recruitment of new adherents was, it seems, in excess of their losses, for in 1786 they had decided that Mackins Hey was insufficient for their needs and were already negotiating for a new site in Hunter Street. The Liverpool Friends were treated by the town with a kind of amused tolerance, for though their pacifism occasioned annoyance⁽⁵⁸⁾ and few could understand why Mr Rathbone refused to supply timber for building men-o'-war, they had not yet embraced actively the anti-slavery cause and jeopardised what most loyal people regarded as the principle livelihood of the town.

The Wesleyans, despite their known professions of loyalty to Church and state, were regarded as a far greater nuisance by the authorities, and in 1792 the Mayor of Liverpool writing to the Home Secretary described their preachers as not only 'ignorant', but 'inimical to our happy constitution'⁽⁵⁹⁾. Perhaps the Mayor's anxiety was due to the fact that the Wesleyans alone among the Dissenters were expanding at a rapid pace, and achieving their success most markedly among the poor. For the figures revealed at each successive Methodist Conference showed that in Liverpool spectacular growth had been recorded since the gospel had first been preached in the town in the 1740s. A mere handful of members in 1750, when Pitt Street Chapel was built, had grown with open air preaching in the surrounding townships to 587 in 1786 and to 982 in 1795, topping the 1000 mark the following year.

Yet John Wesley seems to have found the town of Liverpool more attractive than its Methodist inhabitants. With the latter the great itinerant on his yearly visits quarrelled on three principle grounds - their proneness to schism, for in 1757 an expelled preacher, the Rev. James Scholefield, had disrupted the Society to the point of decimating its membership⁽⁶⁰⁾; their ignoring his model deed for Methodist property and drawing up a 'wonderful document' of their own, 'verbose beyond all reason, and withal so ambiguously worded that one passage might find matter for a suit of ten or twelve years in Chancery'⁽⁶¹⁾ and their tendency which he alternately marvelled at and deplored to wax rich and respectable⁽⁶²⁾.

Early Methodism, as has been pointed out, defies sociological analysis, as it was wholly a revival movement, and hence cannot be accommodated into the neat, stereotyped definitions of sect, denomination or church type

Christianity⁽⁶³⁾. Quite obviously however the social tendencies which Wesley observed elsewhere were in operation here also⁽⁶⁴⁾. Pitt Street chapel stood in a wretched part of the town, a kind of no-man's land of brickfields and waste where the buildings ended and the countryside began. A huge pool of water lay in front of the chapel which was approached over stepping stones. Adam Clarke, its one-time minister, described the place as 'being neither in hell nor purgatory yet in a place of torment'. "Go down Dale Street", he wrote to a friend, 'then along East Street, and when you are up to the middle in clay and mud, call out lustily for Adam Clarke'⁽⁶⁵⁾. As late as the 1760s it was still the scene of mob violence: Tyreman in his life of Wesley tells of a poor wretched tailor whose wife, despairing of his going to the Methodists would drive a herd of pigs through the chapel door at service times.

Such conditions were unendurable to the middle-class elements, particularly the numerous Wesleyan immigrants who were newly arrived in the town, and were used to something better. Already in 1786 they were searching for a more attractive central site whereon a second chapel could be erected. The measure of their worldly success may be gauged by the fears of so redoubtable a man as Jabez Bunting who, invited to Liverpool in 1800 hesitated to come to 'a people so respectable and intelligent'⁽⁶⁶⁾. Methodism was entering its second period, poised not only for evangelistic success among the forsaken poor of the growing town, but with a considerable and increasing nucleus of wealthy men; but so powerful was the revivalist impetus that for the next fifty odd years it succeeded in holding together its discordant social groupings with consummate success.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIVALISM AND MISSIONARY OUTREACH

A) The Plight of the Masses

Working-class participation in organized religion, though varying from time to time and from denomination to denomination, was even in these early days far from considerable, but precisely when the Dissenting churches of Liverpool awoke to the fact that the masses of the rapidly growing town rarely darkened their particular doors is difficult to determine. In the early stages of the Industrial Revolution it seems to have been taken for granted by the churches that the traditional patterns of rustic piety (about which contemporaries spoke more confidently than do some recent historians) were repeating themselves in an urban environment. Certainly when a discussion of the problem broke out in the old Presbyterian 'Monthly Magazine' in 1797, a succession of correspondents contrasted the clean, stable, God-fearing life of the great northern port of Liverpool with the hideous turbulence of Sheffield or Sunderland: whatever the poor might do in those benighted centres of industrial growth, here the traditional social obligations persisted, and the common people went obediently to church⁽¹⁾.

From their earliest years the Wesleyans, in Liverpool as elsewhere, had very soon realised that this was manifestly untrue. Within the last decade of the eighteenth century Wesleyan preachers, clerical and lay, were conducting evangelistic services not merely in the outlying townships and scattered hamlets of South West Lancashire but also in unsavoury parts of the city where the gospel was rarely heard - the Night Asylum for example, or the courts and cellars which were already beginning to make Liverpool notorious. The older Dissent awakened more slowly to the problem. It was not till 1816 that the Baptists, inspired by Moses Fisher of Byrom Street Chapel, began a mission on the north shore, to be followed by others in Grafton Street, South Shore, West Derby and Sir Thomas Buildings⁽²⁾. Meanwhile the Congregationalists had established village preaching stations in Kirkdale, Wavertree and elsewhere, but did not apparently attempt much work within Liverpool itself. Most of their enterprises seem in any case to have been very shortlived.

In 1821 however occurred the first attempt in the town to create an inter-denominational evangelistic body to cater for the spiritual

needs of a particular social class. The Seamen's Friend Society and Bethel Union was established in September of that year, largely through the efforts of Admiral Murray, a Presbyterian, and Bosun Smith, a sailor turned evangelist who had been prominent in open-air preaching on the quayside for some years. The Society was as conscious of the inability of the established churches to attract seafarers, as Bosun Medley had been convinced of his power to draw them to worship at Byrom Street (here in microcosm one can see the widely differing assumptions towards the problem of church attendance made by religious leaders less than a generation apart). The new movement was most actively supported by Congregationalists and Baptists, and particularly by Dr Raffles of Great George Street church who became its secretary. The old battleship 'Tees' which had fought at Trafalgar was bought and turned into a floating chapel, a full-time evangelist was appointed, and the work began.

Its success is difficult to appraise. The floating chapel was always far too big, was sold in 1849, and the work transferred to the Mariners Church, Rathbone Street, opened sometime previously. Later Rathbone Street was also disposed of, a venerable hulk lying at the south end of George's dock was purchased, a 'South Bethel' was built in Toxteth, and a 'North Bethel' established in a room over a warehouse in Booth Street. Clergymen of different denominations conducted the services, but by the 1860s the work was somewhat reduced, as the Established Church had opened a rival Sailors Home for general evangelistic purposes in 1857⁽³⁾. The local journal 'Porcupine' which surveyed the Bethels in 1866 expressed disappointment at what was being accomplished. Only about 60 persons attended each of these places of worship, and these seemed mainly ex-seamen engaged in shore employment. The services were lively and enthusiastic but not really geared to the needs of the seafaring community⁽⁴⁾.

Of far greater significance as an evangelistic agency than the Bethel Union was the Town Mission established eight years later, and known originally as 'The Society for Promoting the Religious Improvement of the Poor of Liverpool', or 'The Liverpool Christian Instruction Society'.

Mr David Nasmyth who founded similar missions in other towns played a relatively small part in this organisation which owed its origin to the same combination of Baptist and Congregational clergy and laymen who had been co-operating in the Bethel Union. By the end of 1830 six missionaries had been engaged for work among the poor, one to concentrate particularly on the Welsh inhabitants of the Norfolk-Parliament Street area, and an adult evening school had been opened in Guy Street. The objects of the mission, clearly laid down by its two most prominent supporters, John Cropper and Dr. Raffles, were to visit, read the Scriptures, convert and persuade to membership of existing churches. No attempt was of course to be made to found new congregations, and any missionary who did so would have to resign. Evangelism was to be entirely personal, and no halls were to be used. Special instructions were given for work among Roman Catholics⁽⁵⁾, and no medical or pecuniary relief was to be dispensed, though private donations would be distributed by the missionaries in years of economic crisis, such as in the famine of 1846 or the cholera epidemic of 1849.

For two decades the work progressed slowly and unspectacularly: the six original agents had increased to eighteen by 1848 and to twenty one by 1857, largely the result of the appointment of new missionaries to specific working-class groups, such as that of Edward Sunners to the cabmen of the town in 1838. Between 1840 and 1868 1,891 persons had been brought into church membership, two million tracts had been distributed, and the same number of visits conducted and meetings held. Unfortunately when these impressive figures are broken down into yearly averages, the achievement seems wholly disproportionate to the immense amount of time, money and energy involved. Accordingly the 1860s saw a complete reorganisation of the Mission's work and witness. Partly this was the result of a large number of self-made Presbyterian laymen, of whom the best known were Alexander Balfour and Samuel Smith assuming office within the Mission - the Baptists, and particularly the Congregationalists were now much less conspicuous and financial support from their churches was on the wane. The chief consequence of this new orientation was that for the first time the work of the Mission began to be concentrated in halls and mission rooms, some of them established and run in connection with existing Presbyterian churches, a practice

later followed, though on a much smaller scale, by the other two Dissenting bodies. Then in 1869 the first female missionary was engaged, to be followed by further specialist appointments, to butchers, public houses and police courts. Even so, the annual figures of 'definite commitments' and 'hopeful conversions', though an improvement on previous years, were still disappointing. Could it be that the poor would respond more readily to mass evangelism than to the personal counselling practised by the Bethels and the Town Mission? To this alternative the Revs. Robert Aitken and H. Stowell^{Brown} in their very different ways addressed themselves.

B) Robert Aitken and Stowell Brown: Early attempts at Mass Evangelism

The Rev. Robert Aitken (1800-73) was a Scotsman who had taught in Sunderland and then been ordained deacon, and possibly priest, of the Church of England by the Bishop of Sodor and Man. The wild enthusiasm of his preaching and the noisy convolutions of his hearers were not however acceptable to the ecclesiastical authorities, and for some years he had only preached in Wesleyan pulpits, though the Methodist conference perhaps wisely, had refused to ordain him. 'Silenced and separated' from the Wesleyan Connexion in 1835, he had become an itinerant evangelist, and established chapels of his own in Stockport, Manchester, London and elsewhere. In 1836 he took a hall in Cook Street, Liverpool, and the town began to witness scenes of hysterical revivalism unparalleled in its history. Ably assisted by the Revs. John Bowes and Timothy Matthews, Aitken had soon gathered a following of hundreds of poor men and women, for whom he built Hope Hall in 1837, and Zion Chapel, Waterloo, a little later. A contemporary description of one of his services in Hope Hall is worth quoting in full. Those who were moved to full commitment in the Hall itself were invited "to go down into the cellar and seek for Jesus". "There an extraordinary and painful scene presented itself. Persons to the amount of fifty or thereabouts were in different postures and attitudes, some grovelling on their bellies, some kneeling and some standing, some anxious, some depressed and some joyful, but all more or less excited, and the majority uttering a great variety of exclamations. Some were labouring under convictions of sin, and some had just obtained deliverance. Individuals were constantly flitting about, ready to aid the parties in their religious trials and exercises"⁽⁶⁾.

The wild enthusiasm of Aitken's 'Christian Society' which some likened to that of the Camp Meeting Methodists of America and England, attracted most unfavourable notice in the local press, and following a visit to Hope Hall by Justice Warren in 1838⁽⁷⁾ official pressures were brought to bear to diminish such excesses. What really killed the movement however was the Mormon mission to Liverpool in 1840 which sought, and found, most of its converts from the Hope Hall congregation. (Aitken's preaching had a millennial emphasis not unlike that of the Mormons, while his assistant Matthews had a sort of love-hate relationship towards them)⁽⁸⁾. The revivalist in December 1840 took sudden leave of his two Liverpool congregations (which at once collapsed), and withdrew to a remote part of Cornwall where his strange Tractarian revivalism became one of the minor ecclesiastical curiosities of the nineteenth century.

Seven years after Aitken's departure there arrived in Liverpool, again from the Isle of Man, and again from the ranks of the Establishment, another popular preacher determined to bring the masses within the compass of the church. Unfortunately Hugh Stowell Brown's version of the Gospel was even more erratic than Aitken's. Brown, the Baptist minister of Myrtle Street chapel, a huge, untidy man with a gruff voice and abrupt manner, was convinced of his ability to win a working-class audience not merely because of his rhetorical talents (which were considerable), but because he had himself worked as a navvy and stoker, and had known the sort of needs and privations experienced by those he was addressing. Accordingly in 1851, at the instigation of a group of fellow Baptists who had recently founded the Liverpool Workingmen's Sunday Services Association⁽⁹⁾ under the direction of Mr Nathaniel Caine, Brown commenced his series of popular Sunday afternoon lectures for artizans and labourers. Within a few months vast crowds of working men were being attracted both to the lectures, and to the Sunday Evening services in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, where preachers of all denominations, including Anglicans and Wesleyans, harangued the Liverpool proletariat into salvation.

The Concert Hall services which lasted till 1855 had a definite evangelistic purpose: Brown's personal efforts, beyond attracting an increased congregation to Myrtle Street chapel, were of dubious spiritual value, their object being, as he himself expressed it, 'to make the mechanic a better man and the man a better mechanic'⁽¹⁰⁾. It was indeed a most emaciated gospel which the 'great democrat' proclaimed, a popularised

fustian-coated version of the contemporary muscular Christianity⁽¹¹⁾ recast to appeal to the toiling masses. There was no attempt to preach on such 'metaphysical' subjects as the Atonement; the Scriptures were simply used as a source book for hero stories, and beneath the laconic, pithy titles of each lecture, 'Five Shillings and Costs' (the most popular of all, which reached a circulation of over 60,000 when printed as a tract), 'Saturday Night', 'Pluck', 'Move on', 'The English of it', there lurked the deliberate intention to prove that cleanliness, good manners, thrift (with Godliness thrown in for good measure) were socially useful and 'improving' virtues, necessarily cultivated by all true-born Englishmen. The results of this 'evangelism' (which in the age of Samuel Smiles was heartily approved of in all quarters save in those which recognized what a travesty of the Gospel it really was) are difficult to compute. Certainly when years later one of Brown's hearers wrote to the local press, signing himself 'Once a clodhopper', and pointing out how it was Brown who had inspired him to believe he could earn £2 a day instead of 2/- 6d, and how he had subsequently done so⁽¹²⁾, we have some indication of the kind of effect this preaching, once described by the preacher himself as 'secular in the best sense of the word', might have conveyed.

What was clearly needed was an evangelist who avoided both the charismatic excesses of Aitken and the humanistic folly of Brown, while drawing deeply on the spiritual resources tapped by those two remarkable men. Moody, as near as possible, was to solve the dilemma, but before even he could appear on the Liverpool scene with any degree of acceptability, the middle classes would have to be convinced that popular evangelism was a necessary, and above all, a respectable activity. This it was the task of the great Irish revival of 1859 to ensure.

C) The Second Evangelical Awakening

The great religious awakening which was to affect Liverpool as other towns so profoundly in the early 1860s found the soil well prepared for evangelistic efforts of all kinds. It was, as we have already seen, in the 1850s that the Nonconformist denominations first began to explore the problem of the unevangelised masses and, led by the Presbyterians, to build their down-town missions, and it was in 1854 that Mr George Pennell, perhaps the most important figure of the revival in Liverpool, commenced his evangelistic labours. There can however be little doubt that 1859

marks a real turning-point in the witness of the Liverpool churches.

The movement started when Dr Verner White, a Presbyterian minister, recounted his experiences of the great Irish revival to the Liverpool Y.M.C.A.⁽¹³⁾. A marked quickening of spiritual energy was at once manifest: by September and October prayer meetings, usually of inter-denominational character, were being held all over the town⁽¹⁴⁾. Begun in prayer, the revival continued in evangelistic rallies conducted by the itinerant collier-evangelist, Richard Weaver⁽¹⁵⁾. Soon the sheer pressure of numbers compelled the hiring of the Adelphi Theatre for revival meetings, and the American gospel preacher, the Rev. James Caughey, a Methodist whom once the Wesleyans of the town had welcomed but to whom they now, in view of his suspicious theology barred their churches, was conducting successful meetings under Primitive and Free Methodist auspices⁽¹⁶⁾. In 1860 the town was startled when a revival with marked charismatic features broke out among the unfortunate women of the Liverpool Penitentiary⁽¹⁷⁾. By 1861 a new phenomenon had appeared on the scene: the revival appearing to have had its most marked effect among young men of the middle classes, great prayer meetings for the same, attracting between 700 and 1000, were held in various parts of the town, usually under the guidance of the Scotch merchant, W.P. Lockhart who, though converted in 1855, had undergone an experience of the 'second blessing' (the quest for entire sanctification was a marked feature of this as of all revivals) early in 1859. The muscular, hard-headed Lockhart was essentially a young man's preacher - soon he numbered in his 'gang', as it was called, Reginald Ratcliffe, the Liverpool solicitor and open-air speaker⁽¹⁸⁾, W.S. Caine and Henry Varley, and had established contacts with Brownlow North and other leading evangelists of the day.

Meeting in a cafe at the corner of Castle Street these earnest young businessmen, studying their Bibles over breakfast or lunch, soon earned for themselves the soubriquet of 'Amen Corner'⁽¹⁹⁾. Next year the revivalists were reinforced by E. Payson Hammond and J. W. Bonham, the American preachers, while Ratcliffe took the Concert Hall for Sunday evening rallies. Two more American visitors, Dr and Mrs Palmer, on holiday in Liverpool, were at the same time 'caught up in an extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit', and addressed enthusiastic meetings in various Liverpool halls and churches. By this time indeed the town was inundated

with evangelists, Shuldham Henry, Captain Taylor, Harrison Ord, Henry Larkin, Captain Hawes, John Hambledon, Edward Usher, Denham Smith, not to mention others more distinguished, Weaver, North, Finney and Grattan Guinness who actually had pastoral charge of Byrom Hall Baptist church for a few months in 1862⁽²⁰⁾. By 1864 however revival work was definitely concentrated on two centres, Hengler's circus and the Pennell missions, which remained when all the other ephemeral meetings and organisations had died away, its most permanent achievements.

Hengler's Circus was in January 1864, taken by W. P. Lockhart for work principally amongst his young men (he was at the time under the conviction that he 'must speak to every young man I know about the condition of his soul, so that I am clear of his blood'⁽²¹⁾), though he still continued his week-night rallies at Hope Hall. Vast congregations assembled to hear the impassioned Calvinistic oratory of the young merchant-preacher: the fact that liberally-minded people scoffed only determined him more earnestly in the stand he had taken for Evangelical truth against an apostate world. Soon his labours had brought him fame far beyond the boundaries of the town, nor, it must be confessed, did he disdain to advertise his work as widely as possible.

George Pennell on the contrary laboured in a more unusual, obscure and self-effacing capacity, and was rewarded, as he would probably have wished, by being overlooked by historians of the town and of the revival alike.

Pennell was a feather-bed manufacturer who had come to Liverpool from Macclesfield early in the century. He was a Wesleyan local preacher, but not entirely trusted by the Methodist hierarchy as his sympathies were rightly believed to lie with the rebels and reformers of the denomination. In 1854, mortified by the death of his only daughter, he had in her memory erected a small iron chapel in Burlington Street to be run in conjunction with the Town Mission. Profoundly affected by the great revival of 1859 he had next been moved to establish other missions in Beau Street, Benledi Street and Kilshaw Street, all situated in areas of acute poverty and intensive Irish Catholic penetration. So spectacular were the results of his labours that soon he was employing a total of six evangelists for whose support he exhausted his own fortune and had even taken a large building in Richmond Street, a low dance hall and a brothel,

where, he declared, young labourers who had come to sin were now remaining to pray⁽²²⁾. The Pennell missions were indeed remarkable ventures considering the areas where they were established - it should nevertheless be recognised that the numbers attracted were small in comparison with the crowds of young middle-class people who flocked into the tiered seats and sawdust ring of Hengler's Cirque.

At this point in fact the sociologist poses his disturbingly relevant question: which social classes were affected most markedly by the revivalists' preaching, and the church historian hesitates before he can allow a movement of the Spirit to be delimited in such a way⁽²³⁾. The very fact of Pennell's missions would indicate that the revival transcended boundaries of class; the most interesting debate which broke out a decade afterwards in the local press seems to point decisively to the middle class as the chief beneficiary of the great awakening of the early 1860s.

The work at Hengler's Circus, having proceeded with undiminished fervour for five years, was in 1870 transferred to Toxteth Tabernacle, a building erected by public subscription and which Lockhart served as unpaid lay pastor, ministering to the largest Protestant congregation in the town. Yet neither he nor his followers commanded universal respect, and a certain 'Shipwright', writing in the Porcupine for 1876, suggested why this was so. The original purpose for which the building was opened - to serve the poor of Toxteth - had, he wrote, by 1876 been entirely set at nought. Public money had been poured into a building which attracted only the lower middle classes, and wherein the poor were conspicuous by their absence. 'Sleek, smiling countenances meet us on every side; it is smug shopkeepers who occupy all the pews'⁽²⁴⁾. Impartial observers underlined Shipwright's conclusions, and remarked on the fashionable, well-dressed appearance of the congregation⁽²⁵⁾. A 'Tabernacle worshipper' meanwhile admitted naively that the poor and ill-clothed would be admitted, provided they were regular, at the evening service at least⁽²⁶⁾, while Lockhart himself enquired petulantly whose fault it was if the poor did not come, but their own?⁽²⁷⁾ Mrs Lockhart's biography of her husband likewise reveals that the poor were a class for which the great evangelist felt a certain pity, but with whom he found social or spiritual intercourse impossible. 'He found it difficult to speak suitably to this class of people'; 'he always spoke as a business man to business men'. When in

fact the Tabernacle admitted that its original purpose had failed, and established mission stations in poor areas to reach the toiling masses, Lockhart found it a painful experience to have to visit them. 'There were 60 or 70 people, poor and wretched. I feel unfit for such work. It is very depressing to see such people. All praise to those who work among them'. The fact that by this time there were plenty of such workers is no thanks to the evangelist who was locally presumed to epitomise in his own person the awakening of the 1860s.

The revival did however profoundly affect the religious scene in several distinct ways. Firstly it introduced the hall as distinct from the church as the most suitable venue for evangelistic gatherings. Whether the hall was a massive secular building such as the Concert Hall or Hengler's Circus, or a tiny back street mission room, it was the only successful means, so the later Victorians were led to believe, of reaching the masses. Hence, home missionary work, if not born of the revival, was certainly nurtured by it into vigorous and rapid growth.

Secondly, the revival heralds the appearance on the religious scene of the itinerant lay evangelist. The 'converted chimney sweep, the reformed pugilist, the penitent pickpocket, the glorified garotter', as the Porcupine irreverently described them⁽²⁹⁾ now appear on the stage for the first time, nor indeed, from the dark subcontinent of Liverpool evangelicalism do they ever really disappear.

Finally however both among Lockhart's gang and those many young business and commercial men who at this time experienced conversion or a Spirit baptism, usually after a period of some years as nominal church members, we are dimly aware of the appearance in the Nonconformist world of a distinctly new psychological type. Business figures like Alexander Balfour, Alexander Guthrie and Samuel Smith among the Presbyterians, W.S. Caine and W.P. Lockhart of the Baptists, J.J. Stitt and William Crosfield junior of the Congregationalists, and countless others who encountered the religious awakening of these years in full flood, did not merely emerge from it as more regular in their church attendance, or methodical in their business habits. As in the case of the first awakening the whole tenor of their lives was dramatically transformed. Once the emotional turbulence of their conversion experience had worn off, and they had rejected a world-renouncing Bretherenism (a very large number

were immediately attracted to the Bretheren, and for some, such as Lockhart, it remained a potent influence for the rest of their lives), they appear to have intelligently appraised their religious and secular callings in the light of New Testament standards, and in the process to have evolved a concept of Christian service which remained characteristic of Liverpool Evangelical life to the outbreak of the First World War. Firstly they were led to believe that their religious vocation could only be fulfilled by active missionary work among the poor. Hence, overworked in business as most of them were, they are to be found on weeknights and Sundays conducting cottage meetings, working at the down-town mission stations attached to their churches, teaching in the Ragged Schools, organizing Benefit, Clothing and Tontine societies, distributing tracts, occasionally preaching in the open air⁽³⁰⁾. Little wonder that these men were often subject to mental depression and physical breakdown - the overstrain in the calling of an Evangelical gentleman was apt at times to be extreme.

Not even in their religious work were their energies completely exhausted however, for second only to their evangelistic labours they placed philanthropy high on their list of earthly priorities. All of them seem to have worried over the stewardship of their money, particularly over sudden increases of wealth: none could hold up his head among his fellow Evangelicals without it were known what charities he had benefitted, and (in a few cases) to what extent. The contribution of the Unitarians to the social services of the Victorian city should not blind us to the fact that that of the other denominations, especially the Presbyterians, was hardly less, even if the principles which underlay it were more traditional, and the extent of their labours less widely comprehended. For education, apart from the Ragged Schools attached to their missions, they gave little, but the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. were virtually their creations, as were the sailors' homes and orphanages, strangers' rests, cabmen's shelters, free breakfast and hot-pot supper organizations, and a plethora of good works all too readily forgotten in days when the depressed classes they were designed to serve have virtually disappeared from the local scene. It was finally a form of social activity, temperance work, which led these men by a natural process into municipal politics. There is a renewed spurt of Nonconformist political

activity in the 70s and 80s, and an influx of new men into the town council, until eventually in 1882 Samuel Smith, himself a convert of the revival, and whose twin intellectual interests, Bimetallism and the Conditional Immortality Question, so completely mirror the interpenetration of the sacred and the secular which distinguishes his type, was actually elected one of Liverpool's three M.P.s⁽³¹⁾.

There is about these men a wholeness and singleness of outlook which not merely betokens a fully integrated religious personality, but shatters the accepted caricature of the Victorian Evangelical business man. There are here no Chadbands, Pontifexes or the creatures who stalk through the pages of Mark Rutherford. Obscurantist they may have been in some of their attitudes, and blind to necessary social change: set in the context of their times, they bear favourable comparison with their successors of this or of any intervening age. But the social consequences of the awakening were still working themselves out in the 1880s and 90s: more immediate to the theme of revival, it was these same men who, in 1875 welcomed, and financed, the Moody-Sankey mission to the town of Liverpool.

D) Moody and Sankey: Renewed Inspiration
To Evangelism

The committee which invited Moody and Sankey to Liverpool in 1875 was largely Nonconformist in composition, the Presbyterians Alexander Balfour and John Patterson being especially conspicuous. No existing building was considered sufficiently large to accommodate the anticipated crowds, and a huge temporary wooden structure, known as Victoria Hall, was built the same year, with a seating capacity of 8000. The revivalists' methods were the same in Liverpool as elsewhere, large numbers were attracted and spectacular conversions recorded. The daily newspapers reviewed the course of events with guarded approval, the weeklies as usual were sardonic and occasionally embittered. Their criticisms however deserve study if only because the prejudices they reveal are remarkably similar to those which underlay the opposition to Dr Graham's mass evangelism in our own day.

To a town where Hugh Stowell Brownism was by now a religion in its own right, and generally considered the only spiritual food suitable for the palates of the masses, the chief offence of Moody's preaching was that its 'metaphysical' themes undermined the 'practical' value of the

Christian faith. 'Their addresses impart no instruction to the ignorant, direct to nothing practical, contain no explicit declarations towards reformation of life and character', moaned the Porcupine⁽³²⁾. Exception was of course taken to what was variously described as the 'sensationalism' 'blasphemy', 'abandoned and profligate language', 'rough, uncouth and unnecessarily flippant preaching' of the evangelist. Another interesting accusation, from a 'Workingman' was that Moody was the dupe of rich men bent on keeping the masses in their proper stations - what was really needed was not religious revivalism, but government action to ease their plight⁽³³⁾. But by far the most valuable comments in ^{the} Porcupine and elsewhere were those concerning the social composition of Moody's audiences.

At the start of the revival it was observed that the congregations consisted of one third regular church and chapel goers, one third artizan and lower middle-class hearers who attended church occasionally and had come to hear Moody out of sheer curiosity, and one third 'heathens'⁽³⁴⁾. Later on this estimate of the number of heathens, by which was meant poor wretches from the slums was drastically reduced. Very few fustian jackets or bonnetless female heads were to be observed, Vauxhall Road and Scotland Road seemed entirely unrepresented, the audiences seemed rather to be composed almost entirely of 'low churchmen from aristocratic Aigburth, Woolton and the south end, or Methodists, and Presbyterians from middle-class Everton, Kirkdale or Bootle'⁽³⁵⁾.

How far Porcupine was justified in playing down the evangelistic success of Moody among the lower classes is difficult to say. Certainly there was some spirited criticism of the journal's attitude from various correspondants who produced evidence of spectacular conversions even amongst the most degraded⁽³⁶⁾, but various factors would seem to indicate that the prickly magazine was for once not far from the truth. Thus, the number of 'definite converts' recorded by the Town Mission rose from an annual average of 39 between 1870 and 1875 to 101 between 1875 and 1880, but this can only be described as a growth from the infinitesimal to the minute. Five People's Halls moreover, most of them very small, were set up as a result of Moody's visit: four of

them ceased to function very quickly, and only one, Albert Hall, run by a Mr William Theakstone, was still flourishing by the time the evangelists returned in 1883(37).

Perhaps however it is in the career of one of Moody's working-class converts, Mr James Vaughan, that his failure to penetrate to any degree the mass of proletarian indifference is most clearly underlined. Vaughan was a railway worker at Edgehill Station, and thus a member of one of the largest organized bodies of labour in the town. Converted in the 1875 revival, he came forward with the grand idea of a mission to his fellow railwaymen, and with the support of Pembroke Baptist chapel, took a house in Barnet Street in 1878, removing to Spekefields a little later, where the work was brought under the control of Myrtle Street chapel. But though a large number of children were attracted, the adult congregation remained small, and in 1886 Mr Vaughan, with the backing of the Town Mission, opened Beacon Hall, Edge Lane, in an effort to attract a larger number of supporters. Here he met with more success, and the Hall which held 400 and was often full, became by far the most important of the Mission's branches. Worn out by his labours Vaughan died after a stroke in 1902⁽³⁸⁾, His career shows what could be accomplished by a talented and inspired convert from a humble background, but the very fact that it was so exceptional, and that Vaughan himself was patronized, not to say, lionized by the middle-class churches is also relevant to the whole question of the social repercussions of the revival.

Of one fact however there can be no doubt: the concern of the middle-classes for home evangelism which had been growing steadily in the 1870s received a tremendous fillip as a result of Moody's visit. Before 1875 only the very largest churches had run a down-town mission; afterwards, no church was complete without one, and for more than ten years the young people of Nonconformist congregations were taught that some type of service 'at the mission' was expected of any one who aspired to be an accepted member of the church.

Another curious social consequence of the revival deserves mention. The Cocoa Rooms Organization, or the British Workman Public House Company, to give it its correct, though misleading title, arose in 1875 at the suggestion of Moody, in an attempt to attract workmen away from public houses to places of more innocent refreshment. The Company by 1886 was

supporting no less than 80 houses, serving tea at 1d. a cup, and providing over 20,000 cooked meals each day. Once again the temptation is to question the motives behind a moral purity crusade such as this, though the slightest acquaintance with the nature of the drink interest in Victorian Liverpool is convincing both as to its genuineness and its necessity. By and large it mattered little that at the time of Moody's second visit to Liverpool in 1883, when incidentally the welcoming committee included a far larger proportion of Anglicans, including some high churchmen⁽³⁹⁾, the same charges as to the overwhelmingly middle-class and churchgoing character of his audiences were brought against him⁽⁴⁰⁾. The historic function of the Moody revival, as discerning people were already able to perceive, was not that it gathered in a vast harvest of souls from the working-class areas of the town, but that it inspired middle-class churchgoers to work unsparingly in the mission halls where alone their less fortunate brethren could be contacted with effective results.

E) Specialisation In Evangelism (1875-1900)

The twentyfive years following Moody's first visit saw popular evangelism become the basic urge of nearly all Nonconformist bodies. Even the Wesleyans, a body impervious to outside revivalist enthusiasm in the early part of the century were, in their curiously isolated way, affected, perhaps more than most: Charles Garrett heralds what can properly be described as the second Wesleyan awakening. But as far as inter- or undenominational activity is concerned, this period is essentially one of diversified endeavour, of the deliberate application of the methods of Moody and Sankey to particular sections of the working class. As revivalism became more complex, it also became more fragmented, and demanded the energies of more middle-class churchgoers. Fortunately there was no lack of volunteers for work which was frequently of an unwholesome and perilous nature.

The most common evangelistic enterprise was of course the down-town mission, a phenomenon not unknown before Moody and Sankey, but now an essential adjunct of any Nonconformist church of any size: the larger ones indeed, such as Myrtle Street Baptist, could support five or six. The mission, which could be a dwelling-house, a room in some commercial premises or a specially built hall, appears from the surviving evidence

to have been a hive of activity. It was not merely for the Sunday services, Sunday school and young men's and women's Bible classes that the active support of the mother church would be required: each weekday there would be a plethora of meetings: tract distribution society, women's meeting, Free Breakfast, Hotpot Suppers, Dorcas society, Benevolent society, workmen's penny bank, Band of Hope, popular Saturday evening entertainment⁽⁴¹⁾. The mission in other words was not merely a religious agency: it served in many ways as the Victorian equivalent of a social club. The degree of autonomy allowed to the mission varied, probably in accordance with the capacity of individual working-class adherents to assume responsibility for running it themselves. No other church seems to have followed the example of Myrtle Street and encouraged the missions to develop as churches in their own right.

Amidst all this feverish activity of the local churches, the great evangelistic rally, even after Moody's departure, was never lost sight of, particularly by the Liverpool Evangelisation Society, a body which arose out of his efforts in 1875. D.M. Drysdale, the timber merchant and popular evangelist, took Hengler's circus in 1877, gathered round him a band of voluntary workers, divided the town into districts, and carried out a thorough canvass of them all. Soon he, and his able female assistant, Mrs Menzies, were able to command an audience of 1500 or more⁽⁴²⁾, a figure which did not diminish when the work was later transferred to the Rotunda Lecture Hall. Drysdale whose services, though simple and emotional, were not marked by charismatic excesses, acted, as he put it, 'as a recruiting sergeant for all the churches'. His adherents however seemed on the whole to have preferred to remain where they were - the churches in consequence gained little from Drysdale's work, outstanding though it was⁽⁴³⁾.

The other great evangelistic meeting surviving from the People's Missions of the Moody-Sankey period, Albert Hall, was less successful. This was a smaller building, held only 600, and usually attracted about 450. Though it enjoyed far more interdenominational backing than the freelance Drysdale, possessed a fine choir, and was ably managed by Mr Theakstone, it declined sharply after 1885 and was defunct ten years later⁽⁴⁴⁾.

The two older evangelistic bodies, the Bethel Union and the Town Mission, also entered on a new phase of expansion after 1875. Three

new branches of the Union were opened in the later 70s and early 80s - the Flatman's Bethel, Man Island, Jubilee Hall, James Street, and a branch of the Stranger's Rest, designed especially for seamen. In 1886 moreover the Scandinavian church in Park Lane, a large and flourishing establishment, became a branch of the organization whose work thus increased two-fold between 1880 and 1890. Attendances showed a corresponding improvement.

The development of the Town Mission was even more spectacular. The missionaries, as we have noted, were by now largely supported by the Presbyterian community, and about half its staff were in fact Scotsmen. A degree of purpose and planning now characterised the activities of the Mission which had in the past been suspicious of organization of any kind, and fought shy of any hint of 'ecclesiasticism'. The finances of the Mission were put on a firmer footing by the establishment from 1887 onwards of numerous Ladies Auxiliaries, the old rule concerning relief work was rescinded when in the great distress of 1884 money and clothing were accepted from the Central Relief Society, and distributed through the Mission branches.

It was not however till 1888 when the Rev J. Barnabas Bain arrived as superintendent that the Mission entered on its phase of greatest usefulness⁽⁴⁵⁾. Bain, yet another Scot, discovered for himself the uncomfortable fact to which we have previously adverted - that the Mission, despite all its enthusiasm, was hardly touching the fringe of the city's destitute masses. His first task was the extremely sensible one of securing as the property of the Mission as many halls and rooms as possible, while retaining the open air work and visitation which had been its chief concern in the past. Statistics of attendance were compiled, and more purposeful evangelistic techniques employed. A great Forward Movement was begun to reach new districts, with special concentration on dockland. Nine new missionaries were recruited, swelling the number to 32, and 12 new halls opened, to supplement the work of the 14 temporary or rented buildings which had been in use previously. Some of these new centres were quite large, Beacon Hall especially. The work of the old Pennell mission in Benledi Hall was taken over in 1891, St Domingo Hall was also opened at the same time, and had to be enlarged no less than three times in its first ten years (Three hundred 'hopeful conversions' were reported from this mission alone). Meanwhile new

missionaries were appointed to men's and women's lodging houses, to public houses, butchers, police courts and carters, while 'street arabs' picnics' became a pleasing feature of the Missions' work from 1889 onwards. Fruitful contacts were established with the Liverpool Vigilance Committee and later on with the Social Purity Crusade, both of which relied greatly on Mr Bain for their statistical propaganda. When, exhausted by his labours, Bain died in 1896 at the age of 48, it was in the knowledge that he had turned an amorphous, and largely ineffective, body into a disciplined and highly successful evangelistic agency whose total evening attendances, according to the census of 1891, was no less than 2437.

The success of the Town Mission was all the more remarkable in that three competing organizations sprang up during this period to cater for the spiritual needs of just those depressed classes it had been designed to serve. In 1885 Mr William Thame, a porter at Edgehill Station, was appointed first Liverpool agent for the Railway Servants Christian Mission. Soon all the terminal stations and many of the suburban ones also had branch missions and in 1887 the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, was taken for a special twenty weeks' Railwaymen's Mission. The railwaymen's services were of an ultra-evangelical character, and Methodist influence was very pronounced: camp meetings for example were held on open sites near the railway stations. Apart however from Charles Garrett, the Wesleyan leader, the churches gave little encouragement to this latest evangelistic venture⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Shortly before Thame's appointment the Rev. Herbert Wood M.A., a young Anglican clergyman from Cambridge, a remarkably self-effacing man and deeply imbued with Bretheren principles, had arrived in Liverpool, determined, as had been Pennell twenty five years previously to seek out the grossest areas of physical and spiritual destitution and evangelise them. Labouring in isolation, without salary or prospects and with the backing of only a few devoted female workers, he had soon established the Home of Love, off Scotland Road, the Home of Joy in Toxteth and the Home of Peace in Richmond Row, three drink-sodden areas of appalling squalor. Wood's were essentially holiness missions, conducted

on much the same principles as the Muller Homes in Bristol. They attracted little notice in the local press and none from the other churches⁽⁴⁷⁾

Such was not the fate of the third and noisiest evangelistic agency which took root in these years, the Salvation Army. The Army first made its appearance in the town in August 1879, having hired for its work both Beaufort Street chapel and the Coliseum Music Hall. Captain Skidmore, the officer in charge, encountered, it appears, more hostility from the Liberal Review⁽⁴⁸⁾ than from the sort of mobs which disrupted the work in other towns. Very rarely had the police to be called in to protect the Salvationists' meetings from the attacks of Catholic roughs in the Beaufort Street and other areas. By the end of the first year the 120th (Liverpool) Corps was formally enrolled, and the first local broadsheet had been published.

Press attacks continued however and though chiefly expressing delight that the good sense of the Liverpool people had rendered the Army's success in this town less marked than anywhere else⁽⁴⁹⁾, the principle burden of complaint was the emotional unbalance caused particularly to young people, which was more than once cited as a cause of the rising number of illegitimate births⁽⁵⁰⁾. The Army however took little notice of this shrill abuse: persisting in their work they in 1883 purchased, through the good offices of the Bishop of Liverpool, a keen supporter of their work, St. Philip's Anglican Church, Hardman Street, which they made their local headquarters. Other branches were opened in several poor parts of the town and in Bootle. As the success and genuineness of their philanthropic and evangelistic work began to be appreciated, the attitude of the press gradually changed till by 1895 it was as favourable as it had previously been damning and unfair.

Though it remained true that the Army had not been so successful as in other cities less well provided with other evangelistic agencies, and though most of those attending its indoor, as distinct from its Street, meetings, could be described as of 'the very lower middle class' rather than of the type of persons the Army was chiefly anxious to convert the Liverpool Review could report in 1894 a decade of substantial progress. By this date 32 paid officers were employed in the city, and there were 2,000 'voluntary workers'. There were fourteen corps, four of which devoted themselves entirely to 'slumming' activity. Each corps had a Hall, in Dingle, Breck Road, Pembroke Place, Everton, Kensington, Walton Road,

Park Place, Pembroke Road, Bootle and Seaforth. The Bootle Corps which reported a whole series of spectacular conversions was the most flourishing, closely followed by Walton Road, Park Place (which used Sefton Theatre as its headquarters) and Pembroke Place.

The effect of the Army's work which was still mainly of an open air nature does not lend itself to statistical calculation, but the figures printed in the successive church censuses reveal nevertheless that far fewer were attracted to its halls than to those of the City Mission which employed exactly the same number of full-time agents. At the most generous estimate 1500 were present in Salvation Army Halls according to an 1891 census of evening attendances, compared with the 2500 or so assembling in the far smaller but more numerous stations of the Town Mission.

The Salvation Army and the local Mission were to be found in most Victorian cities; the Boys and Girls Religious Services were an evangelistic enterprise pioneered by Liverpool men, and largely peculiar to this one town. As early as 1850 special services for children had been conducted by several of the Ragged Schools in the town, Anglican and Nonconformist alike. Not until the year 1869 however when Mr R. Snodgrass, superintendent of the China Street Congregational Mission, paid a visit to Glasgow and studied the remarkable work undertaken there by the Foundry Boys Union did the movement begin which led in 1874 to the formation of the Liverpool Boys and Girls Religious Services organization. Rather like the Sunday School Union under whose auspices it began its work, this new association was interdenominational in character, though few Wesleyans joined, and the Anglicans for the most part abandoned it two years later when their own Diocesan Association was founded. Intense enthusiasm was generated as young men and women travelled the length and breadth of the town, organizing meetings in the open air, in cellars, warehouses, even saloon bars. A glimpse into the difficulties attending their work is afforded by a directive issued by the Union in 1876: 'Two keepers shall attend each meeting, an inside keeper who shall prevent interruptions during the service, and an outside keeper who shall endeavour to have a quiet and serious conversation with any who may be expelled from the room, and shall persuade others to enter'. Soon however, the mission bands had established themselves in most of the poor areas of the town, and were conducting an average of 150 religious services among children and adolescents each Sunday. Gradually the work became more regular, and a quarterly

preaching 'Record' was produced on the lines of a Methodist circuit plan, a fourfold order of workers, Superintendent, Helper, Monitor, and Speaker corresponding to the Bishops, Elders, Deacons and Apostles of the primitive church was introduced, no doubt on Baptist initiative, to replace the former 'Speakers and keepers'; then appeared a yearly Text Book, which, whatever its immediate antecedents, was in origin a Moravian institution.

Diverse indeed were the elements which went into this splendid missionary venture. By the 1880s delegates from Liverpool were visiting other English cities to help in the formation of similar organisations, but by this time the object of the Religious Services Union had in the usual fashion changed from the purely spiritual to the more generally philanthropic. In 1893 it had received a considerable accession of strength when the Ragged School Union was wound up, and its resources transferred to the younger body, and from about this date onwards the work among boys and girls was not complete without free breakfasts, teas, fresh air outings etc., a transformation regretted by many but which was probably in the circumstances inevitable⁽⁵¹⁾.

F) Diminishing Fervour (1890-1914)

It was hardly to be expected that types of evangelism which were directed towards a particular social situation could thrive when the social, moral and intellectual climate of the age began rapidly to change. But in Liverpool it was not the ease with which the churches succumbed to the secularizing tendencies of these decades which calls for comment, but rather the persistence of traditional patterns of worship into an increasingly alien environment, and the conflation of somewhat unusual forces which eventually sapped the churches' energies and led to rapid disintegration.

Of the evangelistic agencies which had flourished in the Victorian high noon, only the Bethel Union declined catastrophically after about 1890. As work was increasingly concentrated in the Gordon Smith Institute, all the branch missions, with the exception of the Scandinavian church and the South Bethel in Wellington Road, Toxteth, were closed. By 1900 the Union was still supporting five missionaries, but total attendances on an average Sunday amounted to no more than 463, a figure which had dropped to 113 ten years later.

The Town Mission could tell a similar story, though their enfeeblement was less marked in that after the death of Barnabas Bain in 1896 their

policy appears to have been to open as many new halls as they closed redundant ones. Thus in 1890 they had twenty stations, in 1900 twenty-one, and in 1910; twenty-six. The full-time staff moreover remained constant at a complement of 32. Attendances however dropped badly, in some places appallingly. Thus Beacon Hall's congregation fell from 402 in 1891 to 380 in 1902 and 208 in 1912. Breck Road Hall similarly returned figures of 350 for 1902 and 130 for 1912. Attendances at Admiral Street, a mission run in conjunction with Princes Gate Baptist Church, fell from over 700 to 100 during the same period. Total figures for evening services dropped slowly from 2437 in 1891 to 2358 ten years later, and then more rapidly to about 1500 at the outbreak of the First World War.

Oddly enough however the returns for the Salvation Army indicate a reverse process, of decline in the 1890s and rapid recovery of ground in the 1900s. The Army had, as numerous letters in the local press made clear, reached its nadir about 1900: then a series of determined evangelistic efforts raised it to a position of parity with the City Mission, for though it had then only 12 halls in the city compared to the Mission's twenty-six, most of these were much larger and attendances usually far more impressive: Park Place Hall for example which held 450 was normally filled to capacity. Possibly the Salvationists' greater success is due to their freedom from the financial and moral support of the local Free Churches which now diverted all their resources to the support of their own declining witness and had little to spare for their one-time protege, the City Mission.

The great popular evangelistic halls which had been such a marked feature of Liverpool religious life since the time of Moody and Sankey fared in a similar fashion to the Salvation Army. The 1890s, possibly because of the acute social distress of the period, were not a propitious time for work of this nature. Hengler's Circus had no regular Sunday services after Mr Drysdale's death; his other venture, the Rotunda Lecture Hall, held its own with great difficulty. At the turn of the century however Mr Reginald Heber Ratcliffe, son of the Liverpool gentleman so active in the 1859 revival, constructed at his own expense Sun Hall, Kensington, a large building capable of holding nearly 6000, and Sun Hall Bootle. Mr Ratcliffe junior, a very wealthy conveyancer and astute

business man, introduced few elements of novelty into his religious ministrations. He usually conducted worship entirely by himself, an un-clerical, sometimes even anti-clerical, tone pervaded the running of the institutions and even the worship itself, the services were of a gay, spontaneous character with a marked emphasis on chorus hymns, and were of course entirely unsacramental. Somewhat distrusted by the established churches, Mr Ratcliffe's experiments succeeded nevertheless in attracting vast crowds of working-class folk who would go nowhere else. Four thousand and eighty persons were present at Sun Hall, Kensington, on a typical Sunday evening in 1912, a figure which exceeded even that of the Wesleyan Mission. The Sun Halls, a cosy feather-bed for falling Protestants, could not be expected to survive the First World War, or even the death of Mr Ratcliffe which occurred in 1915.

The decline of some religious institutions and the success of others in the twenty-five years under review is a bewildering phenomenon, nor is the situation made any clearer by the fortunes attending the last of the city's great revival campaigns conducted by Torrey and Alexander in August 1903 and December-January 1904-5. Torrey and Alexander mark of course a reversion to an earlier, pre-Moodyite, hell-fire style of preaching; they attracted in consequence the support of only the more Calvinistically-inclined clergy and laymen - in fact throughout the whole of Nonconformity only one minister of note, the Rev M'Phiall, a Presbyterian, gave it his unqualified approval. Most others regarded 'Torreyism' with suspicion and distaste. Oddly enough however, in Liverpool the two evangelists seem to have been more successful than in many areas. The first meetings in the Philharmonic Hall attracted large numbers⁽⁵²⁾ and many conversions were reported. For their next visit the Tournament Hall was hired, the largest building in England in which they ever preached. Once again dramatic conversions were recorded, and the mission was pronounced a considerable success. This however is a moot point: the revival corresponded in time closely with the Welsh awakening whose effects were felt profoundly in Liverpool, particularly in Everton, and to which of these two movements those churches such as Kensington Baptist which experienced a marked quickening of the spirit in these years owed their inspiration is doubtful. The only church which benefitted directly out of the 1904 revival campaign was Brunel Hall, founded originally in 1897 by Mr James Heap, a town missionary, in Orient Street

This 'Church of God', which was narrow, exclusive and strongly millenarial in character, had for seven years endured a 'baptism of ridicule' till in 1904 there ensued a 'baptism of fire', a large increase in numbers, and the subsequent transfer of the work to Brunel Hall, Brunel Street, where it remained till in 1923 it removed to Bethesda Hall, Everton⁽⁵³⁾. This of course was not the type of broadly based and widely approved ecclesiastical institution which originated in the Moody-Sankey period. The chief effect of the Torrey-Alexander revival in Liverpool seems in fact to have been to burden revival movements of all kinds with the imputation of narrow, dogmatic sectarianism, and to confine the activities of revivalist preachers to the Cave Adullams and little Bethels of the city's Protestant ghetto,; and from this unenviable position popular evangelism, save in the exceptional Billy Graham period, seems never to have emerged.

The continuance of revival activity on the scale of the 70s and 80s depended of course on the conjunction of two factors, the readiness of the middle-classes to support the numerous down-town missions attached to their churches, and the willingness of the working classes to respond by their active attendance. If these two impulses were to fail simultaneously the outlook for home missionary work would be grim indeed.

It seems to have happened quite suddenly about the year 1887 that the interest of young middle-class churchgoers switched from active participation in missionary work to the satisfaction of their own spiritual and physical needs. At first it was a craze for gymnastic classes which swept through the churches of the town, then followed a zeal for debating societies, literary guilds and all similar forms of self-improvement. As early as the 1890s the older members of the churches were beginning to complain that the temperance, relief and Sunday School work of the missions no longer attracted the support of the young people, a complaint which became louder as the century drew to its close. Then just as the religious allegiances of the Edwardian middle class were beginning to relax with a deepening awareness of the grievous social distress for which the churches appeared to have no remedy, there came to prominence in the city a social reformer with a personal magnetism akin to that of a Domino Dolchi (whom he in many ways resembles), and who diverted the philanthropic energies of his youthful sympathizers into purely secular channels. For there can be no doubt that the zealous,

unhappy, self-tormenting Lee Jones detached countless young people away from their Sunday Schools and churches into his army of voluntary social workers which became so conspicuous a feature of the Liverpool scene at this time. Much as Lee Jones moreover hated the State and State action of all kinds, there can be no doubt that he disliked the churches still more, or that his League of Welldoers became in time a kind of humanist challenge to the whole social function of organized religion within the city.

Lee Jones was thus, in Edwardian Liverpool, the messiah of young social reformers, but only George Wise could command the allegiance of the Protestant masses. Wise, a London factory worker, had arrived in Liverpool in 1888 as agent for the Christian Evidence Society. His talents had at once been recognized, particularly by Bishop Ryle who tried unsuccessfully to secure his ordination as an Anglican clergyman. But Wise had already discovered that his firey gospel of political Protestantism could transform a moribund, twelve-strong mission in Potter Street into an eager throng of militant Protestant evangelists. In 1893 the Protestant Reformers Church in Netherfield Road had been opened, and Wise was ministering to a congregation of over 1700.

George Wise had of course two public faces. There was Wise the faithful pastor and social reformer whose Kirkdale Social Institute performed an immense and spectacular philanthropic work akin to that of Lee Jones, and elicited support from such unlikely sources as the Earl of Derby, and the Unitarian Holts and Rathbones, or Wise the people's friend, the mainstay of the Liverpool Distress Committee and the Anti-profiteering League, a man dedicated to holy poverty in the service of others, who repeatedly embarrassed his church officials by giving away the clothes from his own back, and was always having to be provided with new ones. There was on the other hand Wise the political agitator the Protestant fanatic and street-corner orator, twice, in 1903 and 1910 imprisoned in Walton Gaol (on the second occasion 10,000 of his working-class followers processed with him to the prison gates), the city councillor and founder of the Protestant Party which in the 1900s threw Liverpool municipal politics into unwanted confusion.

Whichever public image of this remarkable man commends itself most to the future historian (and no portrait of George Wise will be complete which does not take account of all his differing capacities) of

one conclusion we may be fairly certain. Political Protestantism, however inevitable in the circumstances of the 1900s could not but have an adverse effect on the numerous down-town missions whose adherents hived off to join in the semi-religious, semi-political George Wise Crusade. But to what extent working-class religious allegiance in these two decades was sapped by narrowly political as distinct from more general secularizing tendencies is impossible to determine.

What had later Victorian Nonconformity achieved by all its multifarious types of missionary enterprise? Individual churches, even individual denominations, could point with pride to their ever-increasing membership returns, but membership and attendance, as Charles Booth discovered in London, could be widely, sometimes absurdly, at variance. The acid test was the survey, conducted by disinterested persons, of the numbers attending worship on a given Sunday, and in Liverpool, perhaps because the churches were so dogged and persistent in their evangelistic labours, perhaps because here religion occupied a place in popular interest elsewhere claimed by politics, churchgoers of all persuasions were subjected to such investigations more frequently than anywhere else. In any assessment of the churches' impact on the life of the masses, it is to the invaluable evidence of the Liverpool church censuses that we must finally turn.

G) The Churches and The Masses: Statistical Evidence

It was of course the great religious enquiry of 1851 which had first underlined the gap existing between the claims of the churches and the stolid indifference of the labouring poor. The Liverpool figures were no worse than those for many towns, particularly the northern industrial centres⁽⁵⁴⁾, but this was cold comfort for local religious leaders who compared the total of attendances with the actual population of the expanding town. Conducted in Liverpool as thoroughly as elsewhere (only three Anglican Churches and the Scots Covenanters failed for various reasons to send in their returns), the complete census showing firstly the number of churches of each denomination, secondly the number of available seats and how many of these were appropriated, and thirdly the numbers, including children, attending morning, afternoon and evening worship, was as follows:-

The Census of 1851 (Population 375,955)

	Churches	Seats	Appropriated	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Church of England	59	60,545	37,365	38,001	4,733	26,423
Presbyterians	8	7,830	7,560	3,984	1,148	1,775
Independents	10	7,942	5,505	3,590	246	3,489
Baptists	11	6,520	4,700	1,758	286	2,161
Unitarians	4	1,791	1,610	985	57	328
Wesleyans	17	8,944	5,782	5,941	1,083	5,647
M.N.C.	3	2,020	1,400	744	-	686
P.M.	3	1,300	900	571	20	557
W.M.A.	4	2,431	1,494	803	-	662
Welsh C.M.	5	4,241	3,123	2,240	242	2,915
Ind. Meth.	1	-	-	20	-	30
Other Noncons.	17	3,185	787	1,067	345	1,248
<u>(Total Noncons.)</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>46,204</u>	<u>27,774</u>	<u>21,703</u>	<u>3,427</u>	<u>19,498</u>
Roman Catholics	16	14,218	6,945	38,132	1,905	15,205
Others (55)	4	709	400	251	-	480
(Totals:		<u>121,676</u>		<u>98,087</u>	<u>10,065</u>	<u>61,606</u>

The individual returns for Liverpool, now preserved in the Public Record Office⁽⁵⁶⁾ reveal that not a few Anglican incumbents complained that appropriation wrought havoc in their churches, in some of which so many pews were taken that the poor were virtually excluded together. Even so the abuse was probably not so glaring among the Anglicans as in the Wesleyan Connexion where pews were sold by public auction⁽⁵⁷⁾ - so completely had the Methodists of Liverpool departed from the ideals of their founder. But whatever the explanation, the statistics from the Protestant standpoint at least were alarming. In a city of nearly 400,000 inhabitants only 45.2% were at church on the Sunday of the census. Of this number moreover, only 26.8% were Nonconformists (the smallest percentage of any English town, except Wigan), while 32.5% were Roman Catholics (the largest of any, except Preston). If moreover the Liverpool Registration District (population 258,236) is considered separately, and the suburban districts thus excluded

from the calculation, a yet more serious situation is revealed, for in this area the scandalously meagre accommodation meant that only 31.1% of the population could attend church at the same time, the lowest percentage of any municipality in England, except for a few London boroughs⁽⁵⁸⁾.

The results of the census were not generally known in Liverpool till their publication in book form by the leading government statistician, Mr Horace Mann, early in 1854. But already a Liverpool organization had conducted an enquiry of its own on the same lines as the national census, and had published its results in February 1853.

This body was the Working Men's Sunday Services Association, centred on Myrtle Street Baptist chapel, where a leading supporter of H.S. Brown's evangelistic labours was Mr Nathaniel Caine⁽⁵⁹⁾, a fellow Baptist and a philanthropist of such widespread sympathies that he counted among his friends clergymen of all denominations. It was he apparently who first suggested to the W.M.S.S.A. that a thorough religious census of this sort ought to be taken, with the object of ascertaining just how serious was the missionary problem facing the Liverpool churches. A committee was appointed late in 1852, with Mr Caine as chairman, and Mr John Calderwood of the staff of the Liverpool Mercury as his chief assistant.

It speaks volumes for the esteem in which Mr Caine was held that when he applied for detailed information to the officials of each church, only two (St. Clement's Anglican and St. Anne's Roman Catholic) declined to co-operate. The rest responded to his questionnaire which was far more complex than that of 1851 with gratifying promptness. Firstly Mr Caine asked for the number of seats in each church, the average morning attendance, how many of these could be described as 'working class', how many children were on the Sunday School books, and how many in Day or Ragged schools attached to each church. This mass of information was then digested and published in tabular form in the Liverpool Mercury on 25th February, 1853.

The Census of 1853

		Seats	Total Attendances	Working Class Present
Church of England	58	63,279	34,593	15,359
Roman Catholics	12	15,310	38,612	29,203
Presbyterians	10	8,680	4,925	1,785
Unitarians	4	1,750	650	30
Baptists	11	7,100	3,680	2,510
Independents	11	8,450	4,870	2,492
Methodists	34	22,934	11,965	8,390
Miscellaneous	17	5,540	2,967	2,348
(Totals:			102,262	62,117)

The last three columns of Mr Caine's enquiry may be summarized as follows:-

	S. S. Scholars	Day Scholars	Ragged Scholars
Church of England	10,181	12,173	670
Nonconformists	11,076	3,895	500
Roman Catholics	5,990	5,160	-

One or two errors had inevitably crept into the calculations. These were taken into account by Mr Caine who in the Mercury for March 22nd 1853 allowed that the total Anglican morning attendance should be altered to 35,526, the Nonconformists to 28,832, and the Roman Catholic to 43,380, making a total of 107,738. He made these corrections half-heartedly however, for, as he confessed in his introduction to the census on February 25th, he was unable to believe the figures which had been presented to him. From personal observation there had been some wild exaggeration in several cases, and the whole census was thus invalidated from the start. Subsequently his doubts were unhappily confirmed, but the 1853 census is not thereby rendered valueless. The last three columns at least are worthy of attention, for here there was less obvious reason for deliberate distortion. The churches'

estimates of the numbers of their working-class adherents are also significant (the Unitarians at least seem to have responded with the strictest regard for accuracy!)

It was not however Mr Caine's own private doubts about his census which caused it to fall into disfavour and neglect, but the bitter attacks of a small minority of Anglicans, led by Canon Alexander Hume, who accused him openly of seeking to undermine the Established Church in the interests of Dissent.

Canon Hume was a formidable antagonist⁽⁶⁰⁾. A polemical Irishman, he was soon to do battle on a national level with H.S. Skeats, one of the most outspoken of political Dissenters. He had already commenced his great enquiry into the state of the Liverpool churches, and collected evidence with which he was to regale successive meetings of the Church Congress, the statistical section of the British Association, the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, and other learned bodies. Unfortunately his works reveal him as a far from profound analyst of the contemporary religious situation⁽⁶¹⁾. It was all very well to belabour 'Voluntaryism', and to produce gaily coloured maps demonstrating how Dissenting congregations had left the depressed areas of the town, travelled so many miles, furlongs and yards before re-establishing themselves in the suburbs, and abandoned the poor to the ministrations of the Established Church - everyone but the wilfully blind well knew that this was happening in Liverpool as in all other cities. It was on the other hand neither honourable nor sensible for the Canon never to incorporate into his work nor initiate himself statistical enquiries into actual church attendances, which, as his critics insisted, would place his Church in a far less favourable light.

But Canon Hume was a statistician of national repute, and an impertinent Dissenter who dared thus to pass judgement on the Established Church could soon be overwhelmed by a flood of rhetoric. By December 1853 Mr Caine had retired, apparently broken, from the lists.

His humiliation at the hands of Canon Hume appeared to be complete, but Mr Caine was not to be daunted, and after allowing a year for tempers to cool, he, Mr Calderwood and a group of friends decided early in 1855 to embark on a fresh and secret enquiry conducted on different lines. Because it was suspected, rightly or wrongly, that the church officials had cheated in 1853, it was now determined to count the number of

worshippers as they actually entered the church buildings. This was of course a formidable undertaking which could not be accomplished all on one Sunday, especially as it had been decided this time to survey morning, afternoon and evening attendances. The enquiry was in fact spread over six months. Great care was taken to choose occasions when attendances would be as high as possible - many Anglican churches for example were surveyed on Easter Sunday. This time also children attending adult services were counted: they had been excluded from the 1853 enquiry. The results then should have been far better than the previous census; in actual fact they were almost unbelievably worse, and showed that all the major denominations, except perhaps the Catholics and the Unitarians, had in 1851 and 1853 been deceiving both themselves and others.

The Census of 1855

(The numbers of church buildings were the same as in 1853)

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Church of England	24,907	3,813	16,122
Presbyterians	3,762	1,060	1,942
Baptists	2,404	121	2,935
Unitarians	920	394	324
Independents	3,406	469	3,407
Methodists	7,861	278	9,640
Various	1,339	35	640
Roman Catholics	37,226	-	7,406
<u>(Totals:</u>	<u>81,935</u>	<u>6,170</u>	<u>42,416)</u>

This private census was published in the Liverpool Mercury of September 28th 1855. It appeared at the height of popular excitement over the fall of Sebastopol, and was thus somewhat eclipsed by news from the Crimean warfront. There were a few letters expressing horror, incredulity or alarm, and another salvo from Canon Hume, but the enquiry was apparently soon forgotten, and -so completely banished from the public mind that it was not even recalled when the next religious census was taken, twenty years after Mr Caine's lamented and untimely death⁽⁶²⁾.

There was in fact no further census of church attendances in Liverpool for another twenty-eight years. Then, in 1881, following the lead of other provincial newspapers, the great Liberal organ, the Liverpool Daily Post, determined to embark on a full-scale enquiry into the church-going habits of the town's inhabitants. In the intervening period the Roman Catholic Church had stabilised its position since the upheaval of the great Irish immigration of the 1840s, while Nonconformity and the Anglican Churches, themselves overwhelmingly Evangelical in outlook, should have reaped the full benefits of the Second Awakening, so many of whose leaders, such as Radcliffe and Canon Hay Aitken, were themselves Liverpool men. Most denominations could therefore look forward to the census with confident expectation. The enquiry, based on morning attendances only, was taken early in October 1881 by journalists and carefully chosen persons who sat at the back of each church and counted the number of worshippers as they entered. (From only one church, St. Simon's Anglican, were the investigators ordered out). The results were published in the Daily Post for 17th October. There were some curious errors and omissions (the Welsh Wesleyans had been completely overlooked), but correspondents and fresh enquiries soon corrected these. The most serious difficulty facing the investigators - the calculation of Roman Catholic attendances at all Sunday masses - was met by the unsatisfactory expedient of counting heads at the 11 o'clock mass only. Fortunately the Roman Catholic authorities were quick to supply the total figure for all masses which is, in the lists which follow, given in brackets beneath the Daily Post figure. So great was the interest aroused that a month later a similar survey of evening attendances was attempted, and published on 15th November. The full results, when carefully checked and amended, were as follows:-

The Census of 1881 (Population 552,425)

	Churches	Seats	Morning	Evening
Church of England	71	72,933	22,798	31,358
Roman Catholics	23	23,245	14,468 (57,687) (63)	9,442
Presbyterians	17	13,100	5,660	4,566
Unitarians	6	2,400	972	1,043
Baptists	20	13,750	4,545	7,050
Congregationalists	14	10,540	3,209	4,693
Methodists ⁽⁶⁵⁾	39	21,364	7,538	12,707
Welsh C.M.	8	6,150	3,436	4,179
Ind. Meths.	2	750	192	479
Bethels	3	1,650	302	668
Church of Christ	2			
Town Mission	13	4,440	1,200	5,964
Various				
(Totals:-			107,539	81,149)

The immediate reaction in the correspondence columns of the Daily Post was one of welcome on the part of Roman Catholics, mild satisfaction on that of Nonconformists (though some, particularly the Congregationalists, were grieved that their best churches which stood just outside the city boundaries had not been included), and intense alarm from supporters of the Established Church.

For Anglicans indeed the position since the last semi-official census - and the Daily Post obligingly reprinted Mr Caine's investigation of 1853 - showed an alarming deterioration. Had his private enquiry of 1855 been more widely publicised outside the circle of his Nonconformist friends, the Anglican statistics of 1881, though still unsatisfactory, would of course, have been less serious than they appeared. As the matter stood almost every conceivable failing was unearthed by some knowledgeable correspondent to account for the decline of Liverpool Anglicanism at a time of widespread religious boom: dry Calvinistic theology, the superior airs of the clergy, the indifference of the laity, the continuing anachronism of pew rents, even the feverish haste to build more churches when what was really needed was to fill the old ones.

The aged Canon Hume wrote on and on, in bitterly controversial vein, but aroused little opposition and even less support. The situation was far too serious for wrangling. Something was clearly amiss with the Church, though the root cause of her troubles escaped analysis.

Ten years later the Daily Post embarked on its second great census. A Sunday in mid-October 1891 was chosen to count the numbers attending morning worship in churches of all kinds, including just a few outside the city boundary. Children, as in the previous census, were included, but the special Children's Services were ignored.

The complete census was published on 22nd October, and this time, of the three major religious groupings, Catholics and Nonconformists were as depressed as they had been elated in 1881, while Anglican correspondents felt considerable encouragement. Nonconformists were at a loss to account for their insignificant achievement since 1881, Catholics, while not questioning the accuracy of the figures, contended that the increased popularity of early morning masses and heavy emigration to Bootle accounted for the diminished numbers at the 11 o'clock celebration. But, significantly enough, no official Catholic figures for all Sunday masses were disclosed till ten years later, and these revealed that there had in fact been a decline of over 5,000 in total morning attendances.

On one fact however, most parties were agreed: if an evening census were taken, which included the large number of mission halls erected in the previous decade, substantial advance would be recorded on all fronts. Thus a letter in the Daily Post for 23rd October from 'One of the Masses' pointed out how the morning census revealed only the attendances of the 'classes': the evening figures alone could show the situation as to his 'own sort'. On 29th October Bishop Ryle himself wrote to the press, requesting an evening census which would include all the mission rooms and halls of the city where 'thousands of the working class are regular attendants'. Accordingly the Daily Post, ready as ever to oblige its reading public, conducted an evening census on 15th November, and the results, especially as the weather on that day was most unfavourable, fully confirmed the Bishop's expectations, and partially relieved the gloom of anxious Nonconformists. The full figures, on whose accuracy all parties (except the Spiritualists who had been forgotten) were for once in complete agreement, are given below:-

The Census of 1891 (Population 617,032)

	Churches	Seats	Morning	Evening
Church of England	91	80,681	25,751	40,224
Roman Catholics	25	21,664	12,248 (49,329)	12,585
Methodists	61	27,812	7,490	13,528
Presbyterians	20	14,270	5,300	7,150
Congregationalists	19	12,854	3,290	5,717
Baptists	23	13,800	3,774	6,028
Unitarians	6	2,250	574	740
Welsh C.M.	11	7,840	3,604	4,034
Ind. Meths.	2	1,130	206	327
Bethels	6	1,470	443	675
Church of Christ	3	667		
Town Mission	14	3,760	1,757	2,437
Various				6,649
(Totals:-			101,518	100,094)

The tide had at last begun to flow in the right direction, for the total increase in attendances since 1881 had outstripped the growth in population. If the churches moreover did not embrace a large segment of the working classes, they had at last begun to make some impact on the solid mass of proletarian indifference, an impact whose significance was underlined by a correspondent of 27th November. Careful analysis, he declared, had shown that while the increase at regular places of worship was but 3,746 or 3%, that at mission halls was 14,396 or 150%. The ensuing decade, it was hoped, would register a yet more spectacular advance.

The following decade was however in the religious life of Liverpool ugly and tempestuous. Acute social distress struck the city, especially between 1893 and 1895. Violent controversy raged in the Church of England between the small group of 'ritualist' clergy and the ultra-Protestant Laymen's League. Conflicts, verbal and physical, were fought out all over the city - the leading Anglo-Catholic, Fr. Bell-Cox, spent sixteen days in Walton gaol; pleas for restraints by the Rev. W.M. Lund, Liverpool's solitary Broadchurchman, went unheeded. Within

Nonconformity the situation was even more confusing. The Social Gospel and its demoralising theology wrought havoc among many churches, particularly the Baptists: conservative Evangelicals seemed to be fighting a hopeless rearguard action against the prevailing Utopianism. But on the other hand, the Free churches of the city, combining for a joint enterprise for the first time since a local F.C. Federal Council had been set up in 1893, had in 1901 conducted a most thorough evangelistic mission. The city had been divided into twenty-nine sub-districts, house to house visits had been carried out while special follow-up services conducted by the Revs. J.T. Parr, C.S. Barrett and A. Connell had attracted over 30,000 people, many hundreds having had to be turned away⁽⁶⁴⁾. Meanwhile the Wesleyans, under Charles Garrett's leadership, had been conducting work of a similar nature through their own Central Mission. It was with mixed feelings therefore that Nonconformists tried to anticipate the conclusions of the next decennial survey.

The Daily Post census of 1902 which included both morning and evening statistics was published in full on 11th November. A total of 178,777 persons were recorded as having attended public worship on the previous Sunday, a larger number than in 1891, but not, save in the case of the Roman Catholics, an increase proportionate to the growth of population.

The Census of 1902 (Population 707,027)

	Churches	Seats	Morning	Evening
Church of England	138	96,808	26,472	41,426
Roman Catholics	36	26,798	19,599 (60,914)	15,731
Methodists	61	34,126	7,440	15,679
Presbyterians	26	15,505	4,629	6,648
Welsh C.M.	20	11,990	3,343	5,584
Congregationalists	22	14,981	3,190	5,803
Baptists	26	15,570	4,433	6,658
Unitarians	7	2,210	491	775
Ind. Meths.	2	1,490	204	381
Church of Christ	4	767	259	448
Bethels	5	1,050	177	352
Various	41	11,852	1,307	7,030
(Totals:-			112,859	106,515)

The census of 1902 was published at the height of controversy over the Balfour Education Act, and could hardly have appeared at any time more nicely calculated to provoke intense and bitter conflict. This took two forms - objections to the accuracy of the Daily Post figures, and faction fights within the churches themselves. Strong protests were received from the Free Church of the Welsh, a splinter group which, as it had no official existence, had not been surveyed but which claimed a total attendance of over 1000. Another came from the Salvation Army whose attendances in the 'Various' section had fallen catastrophically. Much ink was spilled over this question, but the correspondent who on 19th November described the Army as by now 'a spent force' was probably near the mark. The most ill-tempered protest of all however came from the evangelical minister of Myrtle Street Baptist Chapel, the Rev. John Thomas, who declared the poor returns for his chapel to be a 'deliberate lie', and hinted darkly that Pembroke Baptist Church, an advanced congregation of ultra-liberal thinkers, was responsible for the same. Obliginglly the Daily Post conducted another census on Mr Thomas' congregation, revealing attendances even scantier than before.

As within Nonconformity controversy between social gospellers and conservative evangelicals went on apace, the Church of England was likewise rent by angry recriminations. But the conclusion of a certain 'Statist', writing on 14th November, was not seriously challenged - that whereas in the Church of England Evangelical attendances had dropped by 15%, and 'Non-party' by 13%, 'High' and 'Advanced High' (two quite distinct groupings in Liverpool) had increased by 6%, which figure counted almost wholly for the Anglican increase, apart from a few new mission halls. It was not till the Christmas of 1902 that silence fell on these enraged disputants.

Ten years passed. Superficially it was a decade of rapid progress. The 384 churches surveyed in 1902 had increased to 502 ten years later. Bishop Chavasse had brought more moderate counsels to prevail within the Church of England; the cathedral project was well under way. The Catholic population continued to grow, and Liverpool became an archdiocese in 1911. Within Nonconformity the movement towards Free Church unity quickened, united evangelistic services were held, and in June 1908, in preparation for further advance, the Free Churches had actually conducted an extensive enquiry into their own church attendances.

This survey⁽⁶⁶⁾ had proved however that progress since 1902 had been infinitesimal, and that some churches were already showing signs of decay. Nonconformists at least should have been prepared for the solemn verdict of the 1912 census which was published in the Daily Post of 13th December. After corrections and additions (far more numerous than on previous occasions) the final tabulation read as follows:-

The Census of 1912 (Population 752,021)

	Churches	Seats	Morning	Evening
Church of England	190	95,913	21,590	36,342
Roman Catholics	40	26,652	22,209 (75,919)	16,055
Methodists	69	37,075	5,445	14,926
Presbyterians	28	15,995	2,604	4,820
Welsh C.M.	22	13,560	2,535	5,325
Congregationalists	30	16,081	2,130	5,641
Baptists	34	15,916	2,254	5,069
Unitarians	9	2,210	338	614
Ind. Meths.	4	1,630	129	325
Church of Christ	5	1,067	187	335
Bethels	5	800	50	63
(Nonconformist Missions -			1,798	3,692)
Various	66	20,007	2,196	10,723
(Totals:-			117,175	103,930)

The worst fears of all the Protestant denominations seemed to be realized. Though some of the missions were still expanding (the only two congregations of over 2000 were Sun Evangelistic Hall and the Wesleyan Central Hall), most churches had suffered moderate to sharp reverses. From a Nonconformist point of view, the situation was not quite as grave as it had at first appeared, for about twenty-five mission halls had been omitted from the original census, and had to be covered by a later investigation, while the 'Various' total had also to be increased by a more thorough survey of Salvation Army centres. Even so, Nonconformist strength had waned seriously since 1902, while the Church of England had sustained even heavier losses. The usual spate

of letters followed the publication of the census, some correspondents wondering hopefully whether the growing popularity of P.S.A.s and Sunday Afternoon Bible classes would partially account for the losses, others blaming housing developments on the Wirral, the 'weekend habit', the New Theology, and 'socialistic sermonising'. Anglicans and Non-conformists alike discerned the principle cause of their decline in the loss of children from their churches and schools.

Two letters however offered acute analyses of the situation, and with reference to these this survey may profitably end. Writing on 23rd December Dr C.R. Niven, an agnostic, demonstrated from the statistics how 'the net result of ten years' preaching in the Protestant churches is the production of 24,000 empty seats'. The next day the Rev. J.M. Pascoe, a minister of the Wesleyan Church which alone among the Protestant denominations had shown a slight increase in evening attendances since 1902, sounded a more optimistic note: the Wesleyan figures showed that as the masses were being slowly elevated, they were turning not from, but to, the church, a process which would accelerate with more definite results in the future. Whether, but for the the First World War, economic and social trends would have inspired a genuine spiritual awakening, is extremely doubtful. The evidence of the previous ten years would point rather to a growing estrangement of working and middle classes alike from the churches to which their allegiance traditionally lay.

The Liverpool Church census constitute the essential basis for a proper understanding of the city's ecclesiastical history in the nineteenth century. No comparable community can present the Church historian or Christian sociologist with such a storehouse of carefully compiled statistical data. In none was the national census checked and rechecked by painstaking private enquiry, and although many local newspapers followed the example of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and conducted a survey of church attendances in 1881, this was in few cases repeated on subsequent occasions. The London churches were, as is well known, the subject of thorough enquiries by the British Weekly in 1886, and the Daily News in 1902, both of which were incorporated into major studies of metropolitan social life⁽⁶⁷⁾. The city of York was likewise investigated

in 1901 and 1948⁽⁶⁸⁾. Bishop Wickham in his pioneering study of the Sheffield churches, and P.A. Welsby in his assessment of Ipswich attendances⁽⁶⁹⁾ rely heavily on the local censuses of 1881, but in default of later enquiries, the former has to refer principally to growth or decline in the number of church buildings to assess the changing pattern of churchgoing after that date. In some towns, no post-1851 census was ever taken, and in these cases the historian's task is rendered even more difficult by the complete absence of reliable statistical evidence⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Thus, the importance of the Mercury and Daily Post enumerations can hardly be overestimated, for in comparison with the foregoing studies, the Liverpool religious scene now stands out in bold relief. But to argue from these figures as to national trends in religious practice would be, in the present state of knowledge, a dubious procedure, for while the social development of each nineteenth century city is in some sense unique, that of Liverpool displays such singular features as to make generalisation futile and misleading.

CHAPTER THREE:-

PRESBYTERIANISM,

VARIETIES OF SCOTTISH DISSENT.

In revivalism and missionary practice the nineteenth century churches came perhaps nearest to an eirenic spirit. For the most part, however, they remained obdurately isolated from one another, and to ignore their persistent denominationalism is to adopt a false historical perspective. No apologies need therefore be offered for treating in the following chapters each church group in isolation, provided that any signs of growing ecumenical awareness and the mutuality of their shared problems, emphases, successes and failings, are regarded as pointers towards the evolution of a common Christianity.

Foremost place among the churches has been granted to the Presbyterians, an arbitrary selection, but one which can be justified in that by 1914 their denomination had attained numerical parity with most others and a civic esteem beyond most, and comparable only to that of the Unitarians. Since in 1786 not a single Presbyterian church existed in the town, the rise and progress of this religious body is little short of phenomenal: no other English city, except possibly Newcastle-on-Tyne, was so thoroughly Presbyterianised during the course of the nineteenth century.

A) The Old Scotch Churches: Oldham Street and Rodney Street.

Scottish immigrants to Liverpool in the latter part of the eighteenth century customarily found their spiritual home in Newington Congregational Church. The Anglican communion, the 'whistling kirk' as they called it from its predilection for organs, held few attractions for them; the English 'Presbyterian' churches were by now too far sunk in Arian or Socinian heresy. In consequence, the Congregationalists who, though their Order was suspect, held to the right kind of Faith, had enjoyed for over twenty years the support of the Scots community in Liverpool.

In 1792 however a group of seven men, led by Sir John Gladstone, Mr William Ewart, Mr McCulloch (two merchants and a surgeon) agreed at a St Andrew's Society dinner to erect a church of their own. The Presbyterian authorities in Scotland readily agreed, while insisting that the proposed ministerial stipend (a meagre £70 p.a.) be increased to £100. To economise the Liverpool Scots erected in Oldham Street "the plainest devotional building ever seen in the town" (1), and on June 19th 1793 the Rev. Dr W. Kirkpatrick was ordained minister of the Liverpool church by the Presbytery of Dumfries. He stayed for twenty-two years, and the length of his ministry was a measure of his success. He, like his successor, Dr Barr (1815-23) possessed all the theological and classical learning expected of a Presbyterian minister, combined with the rarer gift of a warm piety, and together they succeeded in keeping the peace among a people whose fractiousness was to prove not unworthy of some English Dissenters (2). On Dr Barr's resignation however, troubles of a kind now agitating many Scots churches commenced also in this far-flung outpost of the Presbyterian communion. The Rev. Dr Stewart was the choice of the Oldham Street proprietary (i.e. the patrons): the congregation, backed by the powerful Gladstone family, preferred the Rev. David Thom. The church split, and the Gladstone faction with the major part of the congregation withdrew in 1823 to found a new Church in Rodney Street. Dr Stewart, finding himself in charge of a hopelessly depleted congregation at Oldham Street, left in 1824. His successor, Dr Ralph (1824-42) succeeded nonetheless in restoring to the cause some of its erstwhile prosperity.

His success was due partly to his insistence that his church must not be confused with "the mass of Dissenting sects" (3), but regarded as an aspect of the Establishment, in defence of which he never tired of appearing on party platforms with Evangelical Anglican clergymen. He constantly laboured for

closer union with the Church of Scotland, seeking to gain for the congregations south of the border their proper rights in the General Assembly. The Lancashire Scotch Church Presbytery, formed in 1833 (4) at Ralph's instigation, petitioned the Church of Scotland over and over again for closer organic union, partly recognized when in 1836 the Presbyterians of Lancashire and the North West were formed into the English synod of the Church of Scotland (5). To have one's gaze so firmly fixed across the border does credit to Dr Ralph's Scots patriotism: it was to prove fatal to the evangelistic success of his church which assumed the character of a rather exclusive Caledonian club.

Despite its wealthy adherents however (and the congregation contained the McIver, Rankin, Gibb and McFie families), there was still plenty of tension between people and proprietary, and soon after the appointment of Ralph's successor, the Rev. Joseph R. Welsh (1842-44), the Great Disruption burst violently onto the Liverpool scene. Mr Welsh, who was a mere twenty-six, sympathised with Chalmers, as did most of his office-bearers and members (and indeed almost the entire English Synod). But the spirit of Ralph still informed the patrons, and in October 1844 Welsh and his supporters solemnly withdrew from the church.

Similar happenings were taking place at Rodney Street. Here the seceders of 1823 had built the stately, classical building which still adds charm to this fine avenue, and though the Gladstone family left almost immediately afterwards to join the Established Church, Rodney Street under the young and energetic Dr Thom at once began to prosper. Within a few months however Thom was beginning to display some strange heretical tendencies which filled many pious Scotsmen with alarm, and the future of the infant church seemed in dire jeopardy.

Liverpool Nonconformity abounds with outstanding

characters, brilliant, curious or pathetic. Thom was all these in one. A theologian of such eminence that the universities of Heidelberg and Jena were both to honour him with doctorates, a scientist of no mean distinction who lectured to the British Association, an expert on philology and Oriental languages, he was for good measure a noted antiquarian whose work on the churches and chapels of Liverpool must remain the essential textbook on the subject. Yet this most cultured, saintly man was crippled by poverty, and in his later years near blindness, his academic reputation marred by the tenacious honesty with which he clung to his peculiar theological tenets (6).

For Dr Thom not only embraced the principles of an obscure Scottish sect, the Bereans, but was also led to assert the doctrine of universal salvation against the rigid Calvinist creed of the eternal punishment of the damned. As early as 1824 he had been compelled to accept the Rev. Andrew Wilson as junior minister, a gentleman appointed to keep a check on his senior's vagaries. A year later thirty-five of his church members formally charged him with heresy before the Presbytery of Glasgow which had originally ordained him.

Eventually, after a commission of enquiry had sat for several weeks in Liverpool, and £1,000 had been expended on hiring eminent counsel, a spectacular trial held in the Tron Church, Glasgow, before a thousand people, resulted in his condemnation. Expelled both from his church and from the Presbyterian ministry, Thom withdrew with about 150 humble supporters (the wealthy, as usual, stayed where they were) to a chapel in Bold Street, and later removed to Crown Street, where, as 'Berean Universalists', they constituted a sect unique in Christendom. Here they stayed till their beloved minister, worn out with poverty, sickness and the labour he had expended on his two great theological works 'The Divine Inversion' and 'The Names and Numbers of the Apocalyptic Beasts', died in 1862.

After Thom's expulsion the church at Rodney Street

drifted to the disaster which it probably merited. The Rev. Wilson, now the sole incumbent, struggled on till 1831, when the church was offered for sale to the Wesleyans. It was not sold however, and under the Rev. John Park (1831-43), a talented gentleman who wrote sentimental Scotch ballads and corresponded with Wordsworth, revived considerably. Foreseeing trouble ahead however, he returned to Scotland in 1843. It was left to his successor, the Rev. John Tod Brown, to encounter the disruptionist storm at Rodney Street which raged as fiercely here as in the sister church. Brown however was no Welsh, and stood by the patrons when, in 1844, a large body of secessionists broke away to found a new church in Myrtle Street. He later became so depressed by the small numbers left to him that in November 1846 he resigned to join the Church of England.

After the Great Disruption the two Scotch churches gradually sank into a backwater of Liverpool religious life. Particularist to an absurd degree (Rodney Street became in the 1890s the only church in England to hold regular Gaelic services), they still attracted the allegiance of a good number of Scots families, though those with a more highly developed community sense went elsewhere. Both churches remained in connection with the Church of Scotland, and refused to have any relationship whatsoever with the English Synod. Oldham Street had a very chequered career, relieved only by the long ministry of the Rev. Patrick Forfar (1854-90) who revived the church's schools and broke its long spell of isolation somewhat by associating occasionally with other Nonconformist ministers of the town in philanthropic endeavours (7). After this notable ministry however the drift of population northwards affected the church so seriously that it finally closed in 1908. Rodney Street, after another unsuccessful attempt to sell the church in 1846 recovered to some degree under the Rev. John Orr (1853-71), a moderate Calvinist who even led his people to the revolutionary step of installing an

an organ (8). On his resignation however, a dreadful period of impecunity set in which more than once led to unfavourable comments in the local press on the attitude of the 'aristocratic and silky-fleeced' seatholders (9) towards their church's needs. Yet somehow Rodney Street struggled through these difficult years, and has managed to survive down to the present day, not quite as isolated now from the religious life of the city as it has been frequently in the past.

B) From the Disruption of 1843 To The Union of 1876.

When in the Disruption of 1843 the Synod of the "Presbyterian Church in England in connection with the Church of Scotland" threw in its lot with the Scottish followers of Chalmers, dropped the latter half of its cumbrous title, and stood on its own as an independent Presbyterian Church, two Liverpool congregations became members of the new body - Canning Street, formed by the Seceders from Oldham Street, and St George's, Myrtle Street, the product of the Rodney Street secession.

For the Canning Street congregation at least, the events of 1844 seem to have released a fund of latent energy which could now be devoted to a wider field than the mere preservation of the Scottish way of life in an alien land. Three hundred and sixty-four members settled down under their first minister, the Rev. T. Welsh, in 1846, and among these were some of the most distinguished Presbyterian names in Liverpool - McFie, Nichol, Currie and Lockhart, together with a large number of young men about to make their mark in municipal affairs - Balfour, Matheson, Gibb, Smith, Jardine, Patterson, Ferguson, Rew and Turner. The church, still severely orthodox, could not hope of course to compete with the more radical and popular dissenting churches, but numbers grew slowly, and in 1859 there were 668 communicants

on the books.

By this time the church had become institutional. A mission (an unthinkable adjunct in the days before the Disruption) had been opened in Harrington Street in 1852, and following its removal to Hyslop Street in 1858, had become one of the most flourishing and crowded evangelistic halls in the town. Another mission was opened in Moorfields in 1861. The fact that a Presbyterian church on English soil was now engaged in soul-seeking among the irreligious working-class is a social phenomenon worth noting. The young men of the church moreover formed their own society in 1845, and began to conduct evening schools for poor children in various parts of the city. The Irish revival of 1859 not only gave the church a great influx of members (there were 768 by 1865) but moderated somewhat its harsh dogmatism - a hymnbook was introduced in 1872, while the church eagerly supported Moody and Sankey two years later. How far this outburst of energy was due to the Rev. Mr Welsh, who remained minister till 1878, is difficult to determine. Certainly Welsh was a divine of the old school, and such a foe of instrumental music that no organ was introduced into his church till 1889 (10), yet it is a fact that this stern, unbending Calvinist who never touched upon a political or social theme in the pulpit, nevertheless raised up in his congregation a body of philanthropists and social reformers almost without parallel in the town (11).

The fortunes of Canning Street contrast strongly with those of the sister church in Myrtle Street built a year previously, and opened for worship as St George's in 1845. Numbers here were smaller, and just opposite stood the great Baptist chapel where H. S. Brown attracted the crowds by his radical preaching ("thousands are goin' to hear yon buffoon across the road", a disgruntled deacon was once heard to say (12)). The organ question moreover produced even more serious difficulties than at Canning Street. The ministers (an undistinguished run of Scotsmen (13) who held pastoral office usually for very short periods) could not prevent the twenty-year old quarrel welling up every so often within the church; in 1870 there was a particularly ugly scene which led to the church's being officially condemned by the national synod.

The Porcupine, that prickly Liverpool journal, reported in 1873 that the

church was cold, unwelcoming, burdened with debt, and generally in process of rapid decline (14). Later on a series of evangelists was sent to try to revive the cause, but no revival came, and by 1910 it was recognised as one of the problem churches of the Presbyterian denomination (15).

Shortly before the Disruption, a group of Rodney and Oldham Street members who resided in the northern part of the town (16) had sought to establish a church somewhere in the Scotland Road area, and in 1842 had actually begun to build a new church, St Peter's, which was ready for use in May 1843. It could hardly have been built at a more inopportune moment, for in the first weeks of its life the Disruption wrought havoc here as in the parent churches. Only at St Peter's however did the controversy develop really unpleasant features, for the building had not yet been paid for when the majority of the congregation withdrew with the Rev. J. Wiseman, their minister, in 1845. The patrons, meeting in the presence of bailiffs were too few to support a church of their own, and the brand new building was sold to a railway company in 1847.

Meanwhile, the ousted congregation had built for themselves a new St Peter's in Sylvester Street, opened, together with a school, in May 1849. But it was a turbulent and unhappy congregation, not made any the more responsible by the presence of the Wilson family, one of whom, the novelist Mrs Oliphant, no doubt had it in mind when she later wrote 'Salem Chapel' (17). The church's second minister in fact, the Rev. James Patterson (1857-66) abandoned the place in despair, and together with a major portion of his flock, moved away to found a new church in Everton Valley in 1866. The few left at St Peter's enjoyed a more settled existence under the Rev. A. Rentoul (1867-74), but his successor, the Rev. P. M. McLeod, also found St Peter's an impossible congregation, and withdrew with two-thirds of his people to establish Union Church, Fountains Road, in 1878. Thereafter the fortunes of St Peter's declined very rapidly, as the district became increasingly impoverished and Romanised to such an extent that in 1912 it was sold, and the proceeds devoted to the Hankin Street Mission.

Possibly the chief significance of St Peter's was therefore the schism of 1866 which resulted in the establishment of a vigorous and stable congregation in Everton Valley, where a church to seat a thousand and costing £6,000 was built in 1867. More artizan in composition than most Presbyterian churches, Everton Valley under the ministries of the Revs. Patterson, Thomas Macpherson and Douglas McLelland, developed both an intense evangelistic urge, and a singular reputation for generous giving to missionary and other causes which even drew the admiration of the Porcupine, always sparing in its praises where Nonconformity was concerned (17).

During the middle decades of the nineteenth century the development of residential districts around Princes Park in the south, and Fairfield in the north inevitably began to draw away the prosperous and rising families who met for worship in the Canning and Myrtle Street churches. Unlike some of their twentieth century successors, Nonconformists of this era saw little point in attending a down-town church when they could erect one in their own neighbourhood, and in consequence urban development was a challenge to build new churches befitting both the quality and tastes of those who supported them. Thus in 1857 Trinity Church, a Gothic edifice with a neat spire, was opened in Belvidere Road, Princes Park, to house a small but influential congregation consisting of Samuel Smith and his family, the Grahams, Macdonalds, Romes, Bleases, Cappels and others, occupying a distinguished place in the life of the community. Their choice of minister, the Rev. Dr G. Johnstone, who came in 1859 and remained for over forty years reflected the outlook of the seatholders, for Mr Johnstone was no dry-as-dust Calvinist, but a warm-hearted Moderate, and one of the most brilliant scholars in the denomination, which he served as Moderator from 1892 to 93 (18).

Fairfield Church, founded in 1866, was the equivalent of Belvidere Road in the north end of the town. Again, a distinguished group of Presbyterian families - the Allans, Crookes, Reids, Clints, Camerons, Thorburns, Phillips and Mitchells - comprised the nucleus of what promised to develop into a thriving suburban church. Again, the first minister chosen, the Rev. R. H. Lundie, M.A., was a dignified, urbane scholar of the moderate school.

Dr Lundie was however not content, as was Johnstone, to confine his energies entirely to his own church. It was rather his distinction to become the first minister of a suburban church whose voice counted for much in civic affairs, though, it must be acknowledged, without the presence in his congregation of such notable social workers and philanthropists as Bryce Allan and A. C. Mitchell, his influence must have remained insignificant. Lundie who laboured at Fairfield from 1866 till his death in 1895 was the best type of Victorian minister, as incapable of malice as of discourtesy or ill-temper, and trusting as implicitly in the power of public opinion as in the ultimate triumph of moral right (19). Though only forty-two, he was already well-known in Presbyterian circles on both sides of the border, served as moderator of the English Synod in 1865 and again in 1884, and played a prominent rôle in the numerous church courts and commissions with which, to an outsider, the Presbyterian system seems overburdened. Though his first public work lay in securing sufficient parks and open spaces for the city's masses (20), it is for his temperance work that he became chiefly famous. It was partly because he himself never took the pledge, was never a total abstainer and had no time for prohibitionist fanatics, that he commanded a wide audience denied to narrower reformers. From the formation of the Liverpool Vigilance Committee in 1879 his courage in standing alone before the licensing bench, surrounded by jeering solicitors, hooting publicans and scornful magistrates, soon compelled the reluctant admiration of even his bitterest opponents (enemies he had none). The work of the Vigilance Committee which reached a triumphant conclusion in the early 1890s belongs naturally to our last chapter: its ultimate success was due entirely to Lundie's energies (21).

Princes Park and Fairfield churches were the natural outgrowth of suburban development - the founding of a church in Vauxhall Road in 1867 bespoke the newly awakened missionary concern of the Presbyterian Church in England which had been so conspicuously absent in pre-Disruption days. It was unfortunately an ill-considered venture - the Protestant population of this poverty-stricken area of the city was even then very small, and the first minister, the Rev. James McAndrew faced an appallingly difficult

task, made tolerable only by the generous assistance of the other churches.

On the eve of Presbyterian Union in 1876 the Presbyterian Church in England could thus boast of seven churches (22): Canning Street, the central 'historic' church, still prosperous, though weaker since the departure of its leading families to suburban churches in Liverpool and Birkenhead, its smaller, and more fractious, neighbour in Myrtle Street, whose very establishment had in the first instance probably been unnecessary and whose continued existence was even more so, the two thriving middle-class churches in Fairfield and Princes Park, the flourishing and partly artisan congregation in Everton Valley, the impossible St Peter's, and the pathetic missionary experiment in Vauxhall Road. It was a curious assortment of churches, but not one of which the Presbyterian authorities needed in any way to be ashamed.

C) Irish Presbyterians and Covenanters.

Presbyterian immigrants from Ireland were as unwilling in the mid-nineteenth century to join a Scots as an English congregation, and in 1843 an Irish docker had no difficulty in gathering sixty friends to form an exclusively Irish church in the north end of the town. With the full support of the Presbyterians of Belfast, and the generous assistance of a few wealthy adherents (mainly from Mount Pleasant United Presbyterian Church), a chapel in Islington was erected and opened for worship in 1846: after a few heated debates, the congregation applied for membership of the Presbytery of Lancashire the same year, and was thus absorbed into the Presbyterian Church in England, in whose counsels however it played hardly any part, and for whom more than once it proved a painful embarrassment.

The minister who served at Islington from 1846 to 1873, and gave it its local notoriety, was the Rev. Dr Verner White of Donoughmore whose rough, vigorous Evangelical preaching (23) seemed to match the massive, bare, ungraceful character of the edifice in which he laboured. As minister of a congregation of Orangemen, Dr White, whose rhetorical powers were considerable (he once, in an unguarded moment likened himself to St Paul on Mars Hill) beat the pulpit drum with no uncertain sound. On three occasions in fact his outspokenness led to a local

cause célèbre. In 1849 he engaged directly with the Roman Church, and his book 'Romanism, an apostate Christianity' was the fruit of the bitter controversy he had aroused. In 1854 it was the turn of the Liverpool Liberals, and especially of Mr Nathaniel Caine who had described him as 'a Protestant priest, reared in Ireland, and reeking from its Orange hotbed'. Mr Caine, it was generally agreed, (24) came off the worse. Twenty years later Dr White, now a veteran, overstepped the mark. For long he had desired to play a rôle of some consequence in the local Tory party, to pose indeed as a successor to Hugh McNeile - but the Anglican Evangelical junta who controlled the party in its religious aspect would have none of him. White, snubbed so often, was led to oppose them bitterly, and in 1871 had secured election, despite their opposition, to the Liverpool School Board. This gave him sufficient confidence to attend in disguise midnight mass at St Margaret's, Princes Avenue, in 1873, and launch an attack not merely on the Tractarians, but on the entire Established Church. This, in nineteenth century Liverpool, was a fatal move, as Dr White's congregation realised only too well. Within a month the great Protestant leader had been edged out of his charge, and had removed to London (25).

Liberally-minded folk in Liverpool who never found any good in Verner White often criticised him because his church had failed to draw more than a tenth of the total of Liverpool Orangemen, did no evangelistic work in the neighbourhood, had founded no daughter churches, was ungenerous in its giving, and generally a disgrace to the Presbyterian denomination (26). But such criticisms are rarely accurate, and should not disguise the fact that White had not merely put Irish Presbyterianism on the ecclesiastical map, but built up a church of over 700 members out of virtually nothing, and thus made it one of the largest in Liverpool.

Verner White was immediately succeeded by his brother, the Rev. Patrick White, who ministered at Islington till his death in 1888. No longer was the Irish church the black sheep of the Presbyterian fold, for 'Mr Patrick' was no politician, but a simple, warm-hearted preacher who spoke quietly, visited regularly, paid much attention to the 'Everton Home' which his brother had founded, and even had some sympathy with the southern Irish (he had a sound acquaintance with erse, rare in an Ulsterman). He was also a keen evangelist, having played a leading

part in the Irish revival of 1859, and his services were often in demand. Altogether he proved a most acceptable substitute for his egregious elder brother (27).

Long before the Irish Presbyterians had begun to organise themselves, a few of the 'warmer spirits' of the Liverpool Scotch community, finding even the ministrations of Oldham Street too liberal for their taste, had in 1823 united to form a Scots Covenanter or Reformed Presbyterian Congregation. For over thirty years however they failed to prosper, and though much assistance, including the despatch of missionaries, was provided by both the Scots and Irish Reformed Synods, the congregation wandered from one meeting room to another, occupying no less than eight different places within this period of time. Eventually in 1856 the church which by now had a building fund in existence 'disjoined' from the Presbytery of Belfast to which they had been united in 1850, and were admitted to that of Glasgow. This move spelled a period of greater prosperity. A minister was secured in the person of Dr John Graham, who not only quadrupled the building fund account following a preaching tour in America, but transferred his congregation to Hope Hall, their ninth place of worship, and gathered a regular congregation of 300 to 400. Eventually a church was built in Shaw Street, and opened in 1861. For such a body it was a singularly attractive building, not the least notable feature being the carved heads of the original Covenanters (who would hardly have approved of such graven images) in the stonework of the large window. Dr Graham's congregations did not fall off in the new building, for he was a keen evangelist, and worked in close conjunction with the Town Mission. His various books too brought him additional success and the friendship of other Liverpool clergymen. Few therefore should have been surprised when on behalf of his congregation, the only one of its kind in England, Graham in 1868 entered into negotiations for bringing his church into the great Presbyterian Union which even then was being tentatively discussed. His action nevertheless alienated some of his flock, who in 1869 broke away and took a room in Hall Lane, which, as St Stephen's Evangelical Church, maintained a precarious existence till as late as 1946. The majority of Graham's people stood behind him however, and these became a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church of England in 1876 (28).

D) The United Presbyterians (1808-1876).

Had Presbyterian endeavour in Liverpool been limited to Oldham Street, Rodney Street and their offshoots, the denomination in Liverpool would probably have occupied the same insignificant role as in most English cities. But as early as 1806, a new branch of Presbyterianism was established in the town, more democratic, more ardently evangelistic, far less hidebound by considerations of national traditions and legal restraints, essentially more adaptable to the spiritual needs of a growing town, and in consequence enjoying the support of a much broader social constituency (29). A group of Scots and Irish 'Burghers' who, it seems, had previously worshipped in Newington Congregational Church, began in 1806 to meet for worship in a room in Marble Street, and were a year later recognised as a 'vacancy' of the Associate or Burgher Synod of Scotland. In 1809 the congregation had grown sufficiently to extend a call to the Rev. John Stewart of Dornoch (30), and to open a small, plain, galleried chapel in Gloucester Street, just at the rear of the present Lime Street Station, which served as their meeting place for the next eighteen years.

Undoubtedly the astonishing success of this small church, which could so easily have slipped unnoticed into a quiet backwater of Liverpool religious life, is due in no small measure to the personality of Mr Stewart. A man of humble origins, he could readily have distinguished himself as a scholar had he not given himself so entirely to evangelistic work. He avoided theological subtleties, his preaching being unaffected, powerful and enthusiastic rather than expository. Unlike his 'regular' Presbyterian brethren in Liverpool he co-operated with other Dissenting ministers in all kinds of social and philanthropic work, giving valuable help especially to missionary work and tract distribution, and being chiefly responsible in 1812 for the erection of the Caledonian schools, of which he became master. Long before the year 1839 when he joined with Orthodox Dissenters and Anglicans in the local Socinian controversy, and was awarded the Aberdeen D.D. for his efforts, he had emerged as one of the ablest and most popular of the local Presbyterian clergy (31). As early as

1827 indeed the Gloucester Street premises were too small to hold his auditory, and in consequence a new Doric-style chapel was built in Mount Pleasant to seat 1300, and at a cost of £6,443, the money having been raised on the joint-stock principle (always a sign of the growing wealth of a congregation) (32).

The church prospered in its new building, and despite a serious secession in 1832, when part of the congregation, objecting to their minister's use of Watts' Psalms and Hymns, seceded to found a new church (33), numbered so less than 313 souls when in 1838 Dr Stewart on account of old age requested the services of a co-pastor.

The congregation chose for this junior charge the Rev. Hugh Crichton, a man of similar origins, tastes and capacities to Dr Stewart, with perhaps a more pronounced political Liberalism, and a more outspoken hostility to Establishments. His enthusiasm for home missions, and co-operation with other churches was perhaps even greater, and under his leadership the congregation began once again to increase rapidly (34). Then, in 1840, Dr Stewart died, and the Rev. William Graham was appointed Crichton's co-pastor, his call being signed by 376 members.

Graham was the last and most outstanding of the trio of ministers who raised the Mount Pleasant congregation to so prominent a position in English Presbyterian life. Slight in build, full of emotional intensity and earnestness, with a rich vein of mysticism running through his preaching, his outlook broadened by extensive Continental travel and study in German universities, he was possessed of an enormous capacity for humour, friendship and social intercourse with all types of men. Under Graham's inspiration there began a new phase in the congregation's missionary outreach: under its vigorous minister, and the band of remarkable laymen he inspired, the Stitts, Sinclairs, Holders, Andersons and Cockburns especially, the church seized the initiative in all types of evangelistic effort, some of them previously untried in Liverpool (35). Under these circumstances, there was no reason why the congregation should not expand till yet another new building became necessary to accommodate the increased numbers, but this was not Mr Graham's idea of how Mount Pleasant church should develop.

As early as 1845 serious consideration was being given to the spiritually destitute parts of the town and the responsibility of their great church towards them. The first branch mission was accordingly founded in Byrom Street in 1848, a missionary appointed and a Ragged School established a little later. Other work was begun in Crown Street and Gill Street, the latter (and here again can be seen the shape of things to come) worked in conjunction with the Town Mission. When on the opening of Gill Street mission, Mr James Stitt, a member of a wealthy middle-class Presbyterian family, threw up his profession to become a lay evangelist for the church, co-ordinating the work of ^{its} various missions, the spiritual vitality of Mount Pleasant was plain for all to see (36).

Missionary work amongst the poor was one form of church extension which commended itself to Mr Graham: expansion into the new artisan or middle-class suburbs of the town was the other. The process began in 1846 with the founding of Grange Road, Birkenhead. Derby Road, Kirkdale, was built in 1855, St Paul's, Birkenhead, in 1858, Queen's Road, Everton, in 1861, Trinity, Claughton, in 1863, Princes Road a year later. Well might the mother church have been exhausted by these successive acts of parturition (37). Naturally the congregation fell considerably from the impressive number of 460 recorded in 1847, the year incidentally when on the union of the Scotch Secession and Relief Churches, Mount Pleasant changed its name once again to the United Presbyterian Church. The establishment of the Birkenhead churches was a particular loss, for these drew away most of the rich members of the congregation, the Stitts, Coburns and Andersons, who had recently gone to reside across the water. Nevertheless, a sufficient number remained for their church to be chosen for the honour of entertaining the first Assembly of the English United Presbyterian Synod in 1863, when glowing tribute was paid to the work of Mount Pleasant, by now one of the leading churches in the denomination.

By the time of Presbyterian union in 1876 there were thus four U.P. churches in Liverpool itself. The oldest daughter church in the town was Derby Road, Kirkdale, founded in 1855 (38), to accommodate both the few Mount Pleasant members who lived in this district, and also the Scots seafaring folk who had come to reside in Bootle village, further to the north. The church was thus far from opulent, but under the able leadership

of the Rev. W. M. Taylor, M.A., (1855-72) was soon crowded to capacity, and reported in 1872 an annual income of £2,581, a large sum for a congregation of this type. Their generosity had however been quickened by the needs of the Presbyterian mission in Old Calabar, itself pioneered by Mount Pleasant in 1846, and to which her daughter churches contributed with unfailing regularity. The church moved to Trinity Road, Bootle, the area from which most of its congregation was drawn, in 1887.

The cause of Queen's Road, Everton, arose in 1861 to cater for the needs of the Mount Pleasant members living in this rapidly expanding suburb, the church being erected four years later at a cost of £8,000. The first minister, the Rev. Dr H. H. Mowat (1864-88), a man of very considerable intellectual gifts, is typical of the broader, more tolerant spirit instilled into English Presbyterianism by the U. P. churches. Though playing little part in civic life, Mowat was known as a firm Liberal. There was about him no touch of gloomy Calvinism - his joyous, if somewhat florid, preaching soon drew large congregations, and he was particularly successful with children. He published poetry, lectures, and simple Bible commentaries, and reviewed for the Liverpool Mercury. Though born in Glasgow and educated at Edinburgh, Mowat endeared himself as readily to Englishmen as to Scots, and became very popular amongst the Everton tradespeople who formed the major part of his congregation(39). Unfortunately, the church from the very start was saddled with a serious burden of debt, and even during Mr Mowat's ministry the character of this part of Everton changed from respectability to near-destitution. Income fell off seriously, and this contributed not a little to the church's later difficulties, and to the minister's untimely death.

The fourth, and least successful, U. P. church in Liverpool was that founded in Princes Road in 1864 by sixteen members of Mount Pleasant. Worship was at first conducted in Park Hall, Park Road,, and a small church incorporating such revolutionary features as an organ and stained-glass windows was opened the following year (40). The first minister, the Rev. A. P. Grosart of Kinross, was called in 1865. Problems of indebtedness and failure to expand however caused him to resign in 1868, and the

and the succeeding minister, The Rev. J. D. Bowden, likewise resigned after a difficult pastorate in 1874. Membership had still not reached the 200 mark, the yearly income was only £330, and a proper church building had not been erected. Porcupine, whose judgments, though often spiteful, carried much weight in ecclesiastical circles, strongly advised its closure (41).

Despite the failure of Princes Road however, the U. P. churches of Liverpool by the time of union could look back upon a record of almost unbroken success. Many of their rich families had departed to the Wirral, and those who remained were attached for the most part to Mount Pleasant, but two of the three daughter churches in Liverpool, catering largely for lower-middle and artisan-class families could contribute to the uniting churches a spiritual vitality and evangelistic zeal almost unknown amongst the old Scots congregations of the stiffer school.

E) Presbyterian Union, 1876.

Despite the astonishing progress of the Presbyterian churches in Liverpool, there was a general feeling abroad in the early 1870s that their condition and prospects were far from promising. Increasingly a spirit of criticism was abroad both within and without the several congregations. Porcupine was particularly vocal, and from 1874 onwards ran a series of articles on the Decline of Presbyterianism in Liverpool. Some of its criticism, particularly of Queens Road church, is ill-founded, but most of it can hardly be dismissed as baseless. The chief complaint was that the pulpits were occupied by enfeebled Scots ministers who had crossed the border in search of better livings and had brought with them mannerisms and a pulpit style sixty years out of date. Correspondents took up the same tale, some blaming the church officers for neglecting their duties, or assuming office solely "to better their worldly interests", others abusing the "moneyed busybodies" of the congregations who always seemed to be able to impose their will upon the rest (42).

Whether all this is valid and relevant or not, for some years the Presbyterians of Liverpool in common with their bretheren in other parts of the country had been painfully feeling their way towards greater unity among themselves. In this process Liverpool had played an important, and perhaps unduly prominent, rôle which was signalled when this town was chosen

as the scene of the final consummation of the union proceedings. Though Mr Welsh of Canning Street played some part in the negotiations, the main burden fell on the ministers and to some extent the laity of Mount Pleasant church. (As usual the churches most active in these ecumenical endeavours were those which had the most to give). As early as 1870 Dr Graham had proposed in the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church formal union with the Presbyterian Church in England, but had been defeated (43). In 1872 however he had become moderator, and from that date his great influence within the denomination began to tell. When in 1875 a similar proposal for union was rejected in Scotland, Graham more than any other man contrived that it should be successful south of the border. In consequence all the Liverpool United Presbyterian churches were among the 62 voting for union (there were 31 against), while the seven Liverpool congregations of the Presbyterian Church in England, joined, as we have seen, by the Covenanters of Shaw Street, were also overwhelmingly in favour. Accordingly in October 1875 an impressive ceremony was witnessed in the centre of the town. A procession of United Presbyterians from Mount Pleasant, and another of English Presbyterians from Canning and Myrtle Streets made their way to the Philharmonic Hall, where the two converging streams symbolised the union of the two separate traditions. The pictorial symbolism of the united church - the Open Bible, the Burning Bush and the Dove - was however in the local situation less appropriate, for the Bible stood for the old Scots congregations, whose Liverpool representatives, Oldham and Renshaw Streets, were still as far apart from the English Presbyterian fold as they had ever been.

F) Onwards From Union, 1876 to 1914.

The union of 1876 brought together many churches of varying traditions. It also highlighted a very significant feature of Liverpool church life which sharply distinguishes this city from any other, and largely explains the astonishing vigour of the local Presbyterian churches: the close liaison forged by a few of their leading laymen with the various agencies of the Town Mission.

Here the key figure is undoubtedly that of Mr Thomas Matheson, a China merchant and an elder of Canning Street church who had been active in the

revivals of 1859 and 1875 and was still a very well-known figure in Liverpool despite his removal in 1861 to the Wirral, where he had become a tireless gospel worker and evangelist. Among the whole gamut of Evangelical activities, Y.M.C.A., Evangelisation Society, Purity Crusade, Hope Hall Conventions, in which he was engaged, nothing was more important to him than his secretaryship and later presidency of the Town Mission. We have already referred to the fact that under Mr Matheson's aegis the Mission fell almost entirely into the hands of Scotch Evangelists: more immediately to our purpose here, the same respected leader deliberately sought to link the various branch stations of the Mission with any local Presbyterian church which could afford to run one, and pay the missionary's salary. Thus, while the churches of other denominations were still regarding the mission hall as a daring experiment, for the Presbyterians it became the norm - no church, particularly after Union, was really complete without some down-town premises where middle-class church members, men and women alike, could find scope for their talents in preaching, tract distribution, philanthropic or educational work. Matheson is in other words the man chiefly responsible for effecting the silent revolution in nineteenth century Liverpool Presbyterianism - its transformation from a Scotch colony into one of the most evangelistically-minded denominations in the city.

With such magnificent lay inspiration the Presbyterian churches could hardly fail to expand rapidly in the golden years of Victorian Nonconformity after 1876. Every act of union brings with it problems of redundancy, and the new Liverpool synod failed in its task somewhat, in being unable to unite the neighbouring Princes Road and Belvidere Road congregations till as late as 1926, but in such expansive days this waste of resources was hardly noticed.

The deed of union was in fact marked not by any closures, but by the erection of a new building in Fountains Road, Everton, named appropriately 'Union Church' and designed to restore about a thousand immigrant Presbyterian families, 'all of the working class', to the Faith of their Fathers. This move, an act of faith whose wisdom many doubted, was validated by the action of St Peter's congregation two years later (St Peter's could always be trusted to rise in an odd way to an occasion

like this) when this most turbulent of churches was rent by yet another disastrous schism which resulted in two-thirds of the congregation, led by the Rev. P. McLeod, transferring to the infant cause at Fountains Road. After this unexpected re-inforcement, the church here began to prosper and was soon filled to capacity.

Fountains Road set the pattern for the future: to the far north of the town, services had been begun in the rising village of Waterloo by the Presbyterian Church in England in 1873. Shortly after the union St Andrew's church was opened, and under the ministry of the Rev. J. J. Muir (1876-1901) the work expanded so rapidly that a branch mission, commenced in Blundelsands in the 1880s, was raised to a sanctioned charge in 1898, when a hall was built, the church following in 1905. Similar developments took place in Bootle, where the Trinity Road congregation commenced missionary work in Peel Road shortly after Union. Thanks to the evangelistic labours of the Rev. J.H. Collie, this station became a sanctioned charge in 1883. St Paul's church was built in 1896, and amidst his devoted congregation, which naturally contained a far larger artisan constituency than those in Waterloo or Blundelsands, Mr Collie laboured till his ministry terminated in a complete breakdown in 1906.

In Walton also an iron church hall was built in the growing Orrell Park district in 1898, but this was a small building of a mere 450 sittings. A church was never built, and the cause remained enfeebled till its disappearance in World War II. To the east of the city a new church was raised in Green Lane, West Derby, in 1896. A minister, the Rev. W. Cross, M.A., was appointed in 1900, and a church hall built in 1910. Finally, in the south, two new churches were erected after Union, Sefton Park (of which more anon) in 1879, and St Columba's, Smithdown Gate, in 1897. Thus, it is clear, the 1890s were for the Liverpool Presbyterians a decade of church building comparable with the heroic period from 1866 to 1876: nor did the impetus really appear to fail in the early years of the twentieth century. Churches numbered twenty-two in 1901, and twenty-one in 1914, branch missions sixteen and seventeen, communicants 7,016 and 7,205. No doubt these encouraging figures helped to disguise the rapid fall in actual attendances; for in the Edwardian era, it is clear, more and more people sought the privilege of church

membership without the bother of actually meeting for worship.

No Presbyterian church was now fully complete without a branch mission, an adjunct which undoubtedly helped it recruit more than a smattering of the lower orders, and also kept its middle-class adherents usefully employed. But this should not conceal the fact that from Union to the outbreak of the First World War the Presbyterians failed completely to establish self-supporting churches in wholly working-class areas. In this regard the histories of the Earle Road and Vauxhall Road congregations are tragically eloquent. Vauxhall Road was built as a mission in this very poor area in 1867 by the Presbyterian Church in England. Always a financial drain on the denomination, it had almost expired by 1898, when the Rev. T. G. Molyneux, B.A., B.D., L.L.B., an Australian, strove heroically to revive the work, and killed himself in the process. After his untimely death in 1916 the church was closed by the Presbytery of Liverpool, and the Vauxhall area abandoned to Orange-Catholic rivalries. Further south, in the less depressed area of Earle Road, a preaching station had been founded in 1862, a hall erected in 1882, and a minister appointed a little later. The church however could not support him, and was reduced to the status of a mission of Sefton Park church in 1889. Finally, after another two decades of haphazard progress it became a church again in 1912, and still survives as the smallest of the seventeen churches now in the Liverpool Presbytery.

One last feature of Liverpool Presbyterian life in these decades deserves mention, if only because it must be set in rather curious juxtaposition with the intense missionary enthusiasm of the churches - the remarkable zest for popular culture for which they catered so elaborately. For if no church could do without its mission, nor could it function properly without a Debating, Philosophic, Literary or Conversation Society: - so athirst for knowledge were the congregations (we suspect even in these late days a strong predilection for Scott and Burns) that a Liverpool and District Presbyterian Literary Societies' Union actually existed to secure speakers and even to run training classes for budding lecturers. No-one will understand late Victorian Nonconformity who refuses to recognise that a desire to improve one's own mental culture

and a passion to save the souls of others were perfectly natural and complementary attitudes amongst those who comprised its more active adherents.

But what of the crowning glory of Liverpool Presbyterianism, Sefton Park church, built in 1879, largely on the initiative of Canning Street and Mount Pleasant churches, as a focal point for the more socially distinguished and intellectually vigorous Presbyterian families who were tending increasingly to reside in this rising suburb?

The Liberal Review was an unusually outspoken critic of ecclesiastical affairs, and its assessment of Sefton Park church made in 1882 merits consideration (44). The extremely well-attended church was described as "a fashionable building in an aristocratic neighbourhood, the temple of the upper-crust Presbyterians". Singular in that half its sittings were let, and yet not half its seatholders members, it was thus "the resort of those looking ahead to a better life in more respects than one." But, as we shall note, the members of Sefton Park were already far more firmly established in civic life than the Review imagined: nor does it pick out the one feature of the church which struck contemporaries as singularly odd: the fact that it embraced not only Scotch Presbyterians, but many persons of other denominational allegiances, including a large number of American and Continental Protestants: it was in fact a hotch-potch of creeds and nationalities where perhaps only Englishmen would feel out of place (45),

It is doubtful however whether this intelligent, kindly and broad-minded congregation would have been so fashionable or even successful at all, had it not been for the ministry of the Rev. John Watson (or Ian MacLaren, to call him by the literary pseudonym by which he is better known) which lasted from 1880 to 1905.

Even contemporaries who tried to understand this fascinating man had to admit that they were confronted by an enigma, a creature of so many moods and passions that any sort of consistent portraiture was impossible of execution. Their dilemma is shared by anyone who has studied Watson's numerous literary remains at all intensively.

His most basic conviction was perhaps his incurable Jacobitism, a quality surprising in a Presbyterian minister, particularly one of the Free Kirk,

and explicable only as an inheritance from his Roman Catholic mother, confirmed by his early ministry in a remote Highland parish and further strengthened by his literary studies of Sir Walter Scott.

Transplanted into English soil, these sentiments grew into an inchoate vision of Young England, a network of small holdings filled by happy peasants and maintained by a benevolent Conservative government — for Watson was by deepest conviction a Conservative or Tory, as he preferred to call himself (46).

The second, and more conspicuous, of his qualities was that unhealthy cynicism at which W. R. Nicholl had shuddered on first making the acquaintance of his life-long friend (47). The fierce, passionate, almost fanatical note he struck in his sermons was a cloak for this scepticism, the dreadful moods of depression in his home life its most evident consequence. All too often it turned to bitterness and cruelty, for not even Watson's most fervent admirers can really excuse his dread of physical deformity and the grotesque attitudes to which it gave rise.

Finally, it is with some surprise that we learn that, rather like a Presbyterian Inge, Watson, the arch-conservative in most things, struck his contemporaries as a theological liberal. His liberalism was however of a most complex and muddled kind, and though it led to the only heresy trial which modern English Presbyterianism has ever had to endure (48), no conviction could be secured, and Watson was allowed to continue his ministry and to make full amends for his youthful rashness in his great theological work 'Doctrines of Grace' (1900), a book of impeccable orthodoxy.

How did a man of such intense and unusual convictions react to the day to day life of a great suburban church? Was his phenomenal success the result of deliberately adapting himself to the pattern of his congregation's life and thought, or of his standing apart from both, in splendid, prophetic isolation? The answer is that Watson conformed, and the extent of his conformity may be judged from that most revealing of his works, the lectures on pastoral theology, 'The Cure of Souls' (49), delivered at Yale University in 1896.

A congregation which was highly cultured, wrote Watson, legitimately expected both a church building which was 'beautiful, comfortable and convenient', as befitted persons of quality, and sermons 'in good taste,

with no vulgar thought or expression' (50). As the sort of persons who employed large numbers of domestic servants, they would require at their church a special guild 'mainly social in character', adapted to the needs of this class (51). Again, our model congregation would want to make itself municipally useful, particularly in regard to founding a school or two, or even a university. Finally, the church would also feel some sort of obligation to the poorer classes, and so, when Sefton Park church adopted the struggling cause in Earle Road, the minister was able to justify such action on the grounds that 'the Carpenter of Nazareth had undoubtedly a very tender compassion for the proletariat' (52).

The same congregation would not however wish to hear politics discussed in the pulpit, particularly the 'bread and butter paradise' of the Social Gospel, 'a very poor exchange for the Eternal Hope' (53). The preaching of 'metapolitics' (the term is borrowed from Gore's *Lux Mundi*) was however legitimate: 'possess the imagination with an ideal, and one need not vex himself about action'. But when we enquire what to Watson constituted metapolitics, the rather disturbing answer is that they signified no more than patriotic sentiments - loyalty to Queen and Constitution. As for social reform, Watson, voluble on most matters, displayed an alarming reticence. Rarely could any opinion at all be elicited, and such as were appear strangely non-committal: 'the Purity Campaign is no doubt right, but it has its disadvantages': 'Temperance - you must again count me as a moderate. Public houses will gradually become fewer, and lager replace beer as the drink of the future' (54). Such sentiments may represent genuine convictions; they may on the other hand be nicely calculated to give offence to no-one.

Only once did Watson break his political neutrality rule, and then only to make himself rather ridiculous. All his life he had been an advocate of conscription, and this, added to his admiration for Chamberlain, led him to take an uncompromising stand on the Boer War. His part in the formation of the Liverpool Scottish is well known: it is often forgotten that in his self-assumed rôle of chaplain his childish love of ceremony completely got the better of him, and his appearances in full-dress uniform in parades through the streets were hardly felicitous. His pulpit comments on the Boer War, its usefulness as a corrective to national debility e.t.c, are perhaps best left unread.

It is doubly unfortunate that Liverpool should have produced besides Watson the other thorn in the flesh which tormented the English Presbyterians during these decades of growth and prosperity.

Dr Simeon Ross McPhiall was minister of Canning Street church from 1880 to 1907, and was thus Watson's exact contemporary. A vigorous and forthright preacher who had once wielded great power in the North of Scotland, he was a rigid Calvinist of the old school who, almost alone among Liverpool ministers, was led to give support to the Torrey-Alexander revival of 1904. More seriously, his love of the old paths inspired an unyielding opposition to the movement for liturgical renewal within English Presbyterianism at this time. He, more than any other, delayed the adoption of a new service book, and ensured that when it finally did appear in 1898 its use was optional (55). He was nevertheless elected moderator of the Synod in 1903, an office he held with distinction.

McPhiall however was a kind of Calvinistic curio, an awkward footnote to the Presbyterian church life of this period. It was Watson who till his death in 1906 not merely spoke for his denomination locally, but was regarded as representing in his own person the Presbyterianism of the city, if not the whole of its more intellectual Nonconformity. His grotesque ideas are nonetheless untypical of the churches whose spokesman he considered himself to be. To achieve a true balance the ministry of this most unlikeable man would have to be set alongside the eminently worthwhile pastorates of men such as Patrick White of Islington, Mowat of Queen's Road, MacPherson of Everton Valley, Johnstone of Belvidere Road, Bodel of Trinity Road, and Collie of St Paul's, Bootle, Barkway of Fountains Road, Molyneux of Vauxhall Road, Muir of Waterloo, and many others, moderate, self-effacing ministers, who served long periods in suburban churches, shunned the lime-light but, in devotion to their modest callings, voluntarily preferred obscurity to the doubtful fame accruing to the wizard of Sefton Park.

G) The Presbyterian Laity In the Nineteenth Century.

'Scratch a Liverpool man', writes Sir Charles Patrie, 'and you will find a Presbyterian' - an exaggeration, and yet, perhaps, in respect of the commercial life of the Victorian city, broadly true. For the bare numerical statistics of Presbyterian growth should not be allowed to conceal the fact that this body contained within itself wealth, political power

and commercial ascendancy which far surpassed the achievement of all other Nonconformist denominations, except the Unitarians, whose rôle in civic affairs was only marginally greater, but happens to be far better known because it was concentrated in the hands of fewer men, and has been more grandiloquently publicised by sympathetic historians.

Among those many Presbyterian families which rose to power in nineteenth century Liverpool, few had settled in the town before the century began. The founder members of Oldham Street did not for many reasons establish dynasties - of those who attained prominence only the McIvers and Rews were settled in Liverpool before 1800, and the latter in complete obscurity. We must therefore assess the growth of local Presbyterianism in terms of successive waves of Celtic immigration and while ~~the~~ chief concern must be with the Scots, the singular contribution made by Ulster families from the 1830s onwards must not be neglected. John Bingham for example came to Liverpool from Ireland in 1841, Edward Paul in 1847, James Montgomery in 1850, John Patterson in 1851, W. P. Sinclair as late as 1861. All of course attached themselves to Islington church (though most later transferred to Sefton Park), all built up extensive commercial concerns, the Bingham, Pattersons and Pauls, in the corn trade, the Montgomerys and Sinclairs in shipping.

The Irish contribution pales nonetheless into insignificance compared with that from north of the border. Not all the Scots families who came to Liverpool to make their fortunes stayed when once their object had been achieved: there was in the late nineteenth century a counter emigration, usually to the broad acres of a Highland estate. Nor did all the Scots come to Liverpool direct: the Holders for example came via a brief domicile in Yorkshire, the Stitts via Whitehaven, the Rankins via Canada, the de Bels Adam via Spain. Nevertheless enough came straight from Scotland, and enough settled down permanently in Liverpool, for the Scots Presbyterian community to grow into one of the most distinctive minorities of a vastly cosmopolitan city.

It was in shipping that their economic power chiefly lay: James Burt of Newall, Burt and Company, Alexander Balfour of Balfour and Company (the pioneers of the Liverpool-Chile and Liverpool-San Francisco trade), Sir Donald Currie who arrived in Liverpool in 1843

and founded the Castle Packet line of steamers, David and Charles McIver whose family business, established in 1840, grew into the Cunard Company, David Jardine, their junior partner, Thomas Matheson of Lloyd, Matheson and Company, China merchants, Stephen Williamson, of Balfour, Williamson and Company, later of the Cunard, Samuel Stitt of Stitt Brothers, John Japp, one of Liverpool's greatest shipbrokers - and so the list could continue. It is perhaps of significance to note that once this commercial ascendancy (not predominance, for unlike the Unitarians, these Presbyterian merchants could never actually get together and partition the markets of the world among themselves) had been established, membership of a Presbyterian church was a useful means whereby a minor clerk of some ability could rise to a junior partnership or even higher. The meteoric career of a man like Alexander Balfour, once a humble junior clerk in the office of a Spanish merchant, depended almost entirely on the liaisons forged with the wealthy office-bearers of Canning Street church. Then, having reached the heights himself, he could perform a like service for others, Alexander Guthrie and Stephen Williamson (the latter a fellow Fifer) whose careers began in the offices of Balfour and Company, and ended with directorships in concerns of their own founding (56).

But if shipping was the Presbyterians' special forte, cotton broking was their most important secondary concern. George Brown who set up in business in 1851 and soon became known as the 'father' of the Liverpool Cotton Exchange, Thomas Holder, Joseph Thorburn who, in the usual fashion, rose through the firm of Stitt, Couborough and Company till he was strong enough to establish his own business, and Samuel Smith himself, later the doyen of Liverpool Nonconformity, who struck out on his own as a cotton broker in 1860 at the age of 24; these, with their Irish colleagues, already mentioned, constituted another vigorous and powerful group in the Liverpool commercial world. Other trades are represented among the Presbyterian families, though not so prominently. R. A. McFie, the sugar refiner, settled in Liverpool in 1838, John Graham, his one-time junior partner, in 1846. In the building trade occurs the name of John Nichol, the Edinburgh-born elder of Mount Pleasant church, who gave employment to over a thousand men; prominent in the railway world was Robert Rankin, in the book trade George Philip of Fairfield church, in refrigeration Charles Petrie, yet another 'Fifer' who came to Liverpool

in 1877. These were the men who rose to the fore both in the counsels of their denomination, and in civic life, and, if they constituted only a small fraction of the congregations of which they were the acknowledged leaders, their principles and outlook, if not their spectacular success, were shared by their lesser friends and dependents who sat alongside them, but whose careers have passed, and must pass, largely unrecorded.

The philanthropic achievement of the Victorian city would certainly have been far poorer without the Presbyterian contribution. Balfour and Smith between them were largely responsible for the building of the Y.M.C.A. in Mount Pleasant in 1875, and co-operated again to establish the first society for the prevention of cruelty to children in any English city (57). From its inception in 1875 the British Workman Public House company was financed and managed almost entirely by Presbyterian supporters, as was the Coliseum, established by Smith in 1875 in a very poor area, as an unusual experiment in a whole variety of good works - popular entertainment, gymnastics, temperance, relief and religious services. To the credit of Thomas Holder stands the Liverpool Educational Aid Society founded in 1872, to that of Thomas Matheson the Liverpool Dairying Supply Association, an organisation very active in the 1880s, whose aim was to secure an adequate supply of fresh milk for the Liverpool poor. Apart however from their temperance efforts which demand more extensive treatment in a later chapter, the Presbyterians' chief concern was for merchant seamen, and besides their contribution to the Bethel Union and its various agencies, Balfour, McIver and others were responsible for the founding of Balfour House, the Apprentices' Home in Duke Street, as well as for the Seamen's Orphanage in Newsham Park and the Seamen's Institute in Hanover Street. From the year 1876 moreover, when Balfour and Williamson read papers on the conditions of merchant seamen to the Social Science Congress then meeting in Liverpool, continuous pressure was brought to bear on Parliament by the 'Liverpool Committee of Inquiry', a body largely Presbyterian in composition, which led to the passing of the Merchant Seamen Payment of Wages and Rating Act of 1880, a work of complementary importance to the better-known efforts of Mr Samuel Plimsoll (58).

The political attitudes of these men were firmly Liberal, and one of their number, Mr Samuel Smith, actually represented the town of

Liverpool in Parliament from 1882 to 1885. Of Smith we shall have much to say in our concluding chapter, but here we should note that his success was due in no small measure to the equally sudden rise to power of fellow Presbyterians within the local Liberal caucus.

Alexander Balfour, the respected councillor for St Peter's ward from 1873 to 1881, Stephen Williamson, Liberal M.P. for several Scottish constituencies between 1880 and 1895, Thomas Holder, representative for the Exchange ward from 1872 to 1890, who alone among the Liberals commanded such respect within the reigning Tory faction that they elected him Mayor in 1883, above all John Patterson, an advanced Liberal like Smith himself, who even surpassed Smith in heady idealism and impatience with party discipline (for this reason he could never seriously be considered for a parliamentary candidature to which his abilities entitled him) - these constituted the remarkable Presbyterian coterie of advanced Liberals who secured the election of their darling, Samuel Smith, and all but dislodged the Unitarians from their traditional control of the Liverpool Liberal Association.

Not however that all the local Presbyterians who distinguished themselves in Liberal politics were of this dynamic, progressive stamp. W. P. Sinclair, member for County Antrim from 1885-6 was a Liberal of the strictly orthodox variety, while R. A. McFie, elected to a Scotch constituency at the same time as Smith was returned for Liverpool, was the reverse of the headstrong idealist - a canny Scot and somewhat crochety millionaire, disliked by his workmen, distrusted by his fellow Presbyterians, and not a particularly good Liberal, who finally took himself away from his Moorfields office to a Scottish castle where Liverpool gladly lost sight of him.

Liverpool Liberalism was to be wrecked by Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule in 1885, and nowhere is the havoc caused by this measure seen more clearly than within the ranks of the local Presbyterians. The Irish deserted en bloc: the Bingham, Sinclairs and even good John Patterson, the sensitive idealist, went over at once to the grim-faced ranks of Liberal Unionism, Sinclair actually representing Falkirk Boroughs in this interest from 1886 to 1892. The Stitts and many others followed suit.

Thus, allied to the fact that from the Verner White era there had been a persistent strain of militant Toryism within the denomination and

that the old established families had developed socially to a point where this political creed came naturally to them (the McIvers of Calderstones had acquired armorial bearings in 1884, and David McIver had become Conservative M.P. for Birkenhead in 1885, on a platform of rigid Protectionism), it is hardly surprising that the Home Rule question made Conservatism a permissible political attitude among Liverpool Presbyterians, many of whom for one reason or another found Liberal principles no longer tenable.

This division of opinion is, interestingly enough, reflected in Sefton Park church, the political as well as the social pulse of local Presbyterianism. Six Mayors or Lord Mayors sat in its pews during the ministry of Dr Watson, three Liberals - the veteran Holder, John Lea, one of the Lundie-Balfour temperance school, a coal merchant of moderate means, representative for Abercromby ward and Lord Mayor from 1904-5, and John Japp, representing Sefton Park East, Lord Mayor from 1906-7, and the man chiefly responsible for the Liberal victory in the East Toxteth constituency in 1906; and three conservatives, James de Bels Adam, fruitbroker and Mayor from 1891-2, Sir Charles Petrie, representative of Lime Street ward and Lord Mayor from 1901-2, and William Watson Rutherford, Lord Mayor from 1902-3 and elected M.P. for West Derby in the latter year.

Rutherford is representative of a new generation of Presbyterian laymen, not merely in his political allegiance, but in much else. For the Scots families who were migrating to Liverpool in the later years of the century were not the thrustful business men of former times, but solicitors, teachers, doctors, even professors at the newly established university college. Rutherford, himself a solicitor, and an Oxford graduate of a remarkably intellectual cast of mind, was typical of their sort. They added fresh lustre, greater learning and a more refined spirituality to the churches in which they took their place: but with the passing of the Mathesons, Balfours and Smiths, (poor Samuel with his solemn visage, drooping whiskers and penchant for prayer meetings and Sabbath observance was regarded as a laconically old-fashioned figure by the turn of the century), the enthusiastic missionary concern of these businessmen-evangelists passed away also - and the day would come when their Church would regret its passing.

CHAPTER FOUR:-

CONGREGATIONALISM,

THE RESPECTABILITY OF DISSENT.

A) A Solid Foundation (1786-1860).

Congregationalism in Liverpool pursued the same useful and in general unexciting course that marked its development in other cities. Despite, or perhaps because of its independent polity, it managed to avoid the schismatic tendencies which afflicted many denominations and in no small measure remained doctrinally orthodox in decades when orthodoxy was most out of fashion. If not, as Charles Booth would have it, purely the spiritual expression of a distinct social group, it certainly appears to have occupied a general position in the centre of the social spectrum, and to have recruited few adherents either from above or from below. It was staid, respectable, orderly, and lacked both engaging eccentrics and prophetic reformers. Yet its spirit was not Laodicean, for if it rarely blew hot with evangelistic zeal, it never coldly disdained the opportunity to extend its witness by reasonable means, and brought all its sensible business talents to the acquiring of new sites and the foundation of new churches.

The denomination, as we have seen, was in the Liverpool of 1786 represented by one church only, that in Newington Fields. To the turn of the century no new cause was formed, then, between 1800 and 1830 there occurred an era of rapid progress and extensive chapel building, followed by another three decades of slower development. The Liverpool scene thus tends to resemble that in Sheffield and other cities where a similar pattern is discernible (1).

The historic Newington church enjoyed the services of its enthusiastic pastor, Mr Bruce, till the year 1808 when he died in his 58th year and the 32nd year of his Liverpool ministry. His church had been weakened by the withdrawal of the Scots contingent in 1792, but their place had been taken by others, and in his later years, Bruce was able to engage as co-pastor his nephew, the Rev. John Bruce, (2).

On Bruce's death there occurred a delay of three years before a new minister could be secured, and it was not till February 1811 that the Rev. Thomas Spencer assumed office. The year 1811 was in Liverpool a difficult one of distress mingled with an undercurrent of millennial expectation, and somehow the gradiloquent preaching of the twenty-year old pastor which was said to have approached nearest to the pathos and

fascination of George Whitefield (3) answered to the contemporary mood, and produced a thrill of excitement throughout the town. Vast congregations assembled almost immediately, the building at once became too small, and within a month the foundation stone of a new chapel to seat 2,000 had been laid in Great George Street by Mr Spencer in the presence of a congregation of 6,000. On Sunday, August 4th, 1811, he preached in Newington chapel to a huge congregation with hundreds standing outside. The following day he was drowned bathing in a secluded spot near the Herculaneum Pottery. Grief swept through the congregation and the town. The latter had lost the finest of Evangelical preachers, the former was saddled with a huge new building which it would probably never be able to fill.

Providentially a preacher in the person of the Rev. Thomas Raffles was found to occupy with outstanding success the pulpit of Great George Street church, but before turning to this brilliant ministry something should be said concerning the fate of the Newington cause. This of course was intended to be closed on the completion of Great George Street, but though most members transferred to the new building, a few stayed on, and in 1814 the church was reconstituted. In the Rev. Robert Philip (1815-26) the little flock seemed to have obtained a young minister to hold his own against the dynamic Raffles, but though Philip, the son of one of the founders of Scotch Independency, was a tolerable preacher who concentrated particularly on work among seamen (4), the cause failed to prosper, and in 1826 he removed to London where he became distinguished as a theologian and ecclesiastical biographer (5). Thereafter Newington church suffered a succession of very short and undistinguished pastorates declining all the time until in 1872, following an altercation, it was finally closed and disposed of to the Lutherans (6).

By this time it was a largely forgotten cause, even among the Liverpool Independents who had for many years basked in the lustre of Great George Street and its far-famed pastor.

Thomas Raffles, if not the greatest figure in Liverpool Nonconformity, certainly occupies a conspicuous place in any local Dissenting pantheon. When this young man, brought up by a Wesleyan mother and a Baptist schoolmaster and educated at an Independent seminary, was first invited to

Liverpool to succeed the lamented Spencer, few could have foreseen that he was destined to occupy here a position akin to that of Thomas Binney in the metropolis - for Raffles epitomises that broad, expansive phase of Congregationalism which prevailed between the first and second Evangelical revivals, and seems in retrospect so felicitous a period in the denomination's history.

For his church Raffles laboured with unbounded devotion. Year by year he watched it progress both in numbers and influence, until, according to Porcupine, it had become "his special glory that by his tact and dignity he raised Nonconformity to a high social status": no greater service did he perform in the eyes of this journal than to elevate Dissent above "the indignities and deteriorations arising from public disesteem" (7). His 2,000-strong congregation which contained such families as the Mercers, Rankins, Jobs, Hurrys, Bleases, Marples, James, Blackallers and Crosfields, and where even Anglicans like the Bickersteths and Gladstones were occasional visitors, responded to his success by voting him a salary of £300 soon after his advent, a sum raised to the phenomenal figure of £700 by 1841 (8) and which enabled him to support both a country house on the outskirts of Liverpool and a villa at New Brighton. There are suggestions that the congregation was somewhat cold, unsympathetic and autocratic in contrast to their warm-hearted minister (9), and certainly the frequent dismissal of members for commercial laxity or business failure, so conspicuous in the minute books of the time, do little to erase this impression, but Raffles, though he rarely paid tribute to his flock, never despaired of it, or attacked it openly. The most serious episode in fact during his entire ministry was not any altercation but the disastrous fire which gutted the building in February 1840, the day after it had been insured for £4,000. The next day a houseparty of the leading supporters contributed £3,672 towards a rebuilding scheme which cost in the end £13,922, and had all been raised within a few years. Whatever worries afflicted Thomas Raffles, pecuniary ones were not among them (10).

His local ministry exhausted only a small part of Raffles' energies. Conscious of his duties as a citizen, he engaged spiritedly in civic affairs, becoming a co-founder of the Seamen's Friend Society which he later served as secretary, founder of the Liverpool Religious Tract Society, founder of the Amicable Book Society 'for men of superior

culture and intelligence', while he worked consistently with representatives of other churches in the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Liverpool Infirmary, the Lunatic Asylum (for which he wrote the annual reports) and numerous other local charities. In municipal politics however he refused to take any part, for though he had been given the vote in 1832 and was a consistent Whig, he had a dislike of radicalism of all kinds, and wrote a well-known patriotic hymn, 'England, my country, for ever' (11). Only on the question of slavery did he abandon his customary reserve. Then he acted as a kind of liaison between the liberally-minded merchants of Liverpool and the radical Dukes of Sussex and Somerset who were, probably through his cousin, Sir Stamford Raffles, his personal friends, served on the Committee of the Liverpool Abolition Society, and finally in April 1833, was chosen to accompany the famous deputation to the King on the Slavery question (12).

In the midst of all these activities Raffles somehow found time to serve many other Independent churches to such an extent that he became known as "the patriarch of the denomination in Lancashire" (13). Having played a leading part in the establishment of Blackburn Academy in 1816 he was chiefly responsible for its removal to Manchester in 1843. Most of the money raised for his jubilee in 1861 he contributed to the college which by this time owed more to him than to any other man. He served also as secretary of the Lancashire County Union from 1826 to 1863, and began its fascinating series of annual reports. Meanwhile he was a frequent preacher at the Congregational May Meetings, and became chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1839. Raffles never tired however of giving his services to the obscurest village bethel, for he had a real liking for the humblest of men, many of whom he numbered among his closest friends. Perhaps for this reason he always rejected the lure of a London pulpit, tempting though many of such offers were, especially that of succeeding Rowland Hill at Surrey chapel where the vacant pulpit was offered him in 1833.

In the midst of all these duties, which often taxed him to breaking point, Raffles in addition found time for literary composition. His Life of Spencer, his predecessor, became justly famous and ran into many editions, his other theological works, his hymns and his short-lived

religious and philosophical magazine, 'The Investigator', did not bring him much reward however, for his numerous journeyings and activities of all kinds left him little time for study, and his scholarship suffered thereby. Aberdeen conferred on him an L.L.D. in 1821, and Union College, Connecticut, a D.D. in 1830.

His writings reveal Raffles as a moderate Calvinist, "sound and comprehensive without either the restlessness of enquiry or the suspicious tenacity of a bigotedly limited belief. His trumpet gave no uncertain sound, but neither did it give a harsh one" (14). He had no time for the moralistic homilies of men such as Stowell Brown: indeed, even in a 'practical' sermon, Raffles would "give it a twist so as to bring in Christ and his great salvation" (15). Controversy he disliked, but when the faith seemed to be threatened, he was an uncompromising apologist. Thus he attacked the left-wing Unitarian 'Independent Debating Society' in 1817 as "a hot-bed of vice, seminary of infidelity, corrupter of the morals of youth, and school for the dissemination of atheism", and was largely responsible for its suppression. Thirteen years later he was attacked by a Unitarian of Hull, the Rev. Edward Higginson, but did not even deign to reply. Finally, when in 1858 liberalism raised its head within his own denomination in the person of Professor Davidson, he spared no pains to secure Davidson's dismissal.

Yet it would be wrong to think of Raffles as an illiberal man. His 'catholicity' was what most impressed his contemporaries, and of this there are abundant illustrations. His preaching from the pulpits of other denominations, including the Anglican, when he would don the white surplice, his worshipping in Catholic churches during his numerous Continental tours, his happy association with Dr Wiseman (16) are as revealing as his Wordsworthian delight in natural beauty, or his sponsoring the Liverpool meetings of the British Association. His proclivities were, if anything catholic to excess, and his career might well have been more fruitful had they been more narrowly channelled. As it was, Raffles epitomises the urbane Congregationalism of his day in its most attractive aspect, and his Liverpool followers had good reason in 1863 to moan the passing of their most distinguished representative.

Newington and Great George Street represent only one strand in the pattern of Congregational expansion during this period. Equally important in Liverpool were two other churches arising, from dissatisfaction in one case, and from licence in the other, within the Established Church.

All Saints Church, Grosvenor Street, had been built in unusual circumstances by the Rev. George Bannister, an Anglican clergyman, in 1798. It was unconsecrated, Bannister had no bishop's licence, and used a revised liturgy of his own making. A hyper-Calvinist, he had invited to his pulpit a large number of Dissenters, including even William Gadsby, the Strict Baptist. Conditions at All Saints however rapidly became impossible, and in 1810 sixteen of the congregation led by Barton Haigh and William Merriman seceded and took a room in Maguire Street, engaging for a time the Rev. James Macpherson as their minister. He remained for only three years however, after which he started a short-lived cause of his own in Cockspur Street. His successor, the Rev. John Ralph, another strict Calvinist, persuaded the congregation to build him a new place of worship, and Bethesda, Hotham Street, was opened in 1803 (17). Unfortunately, Ralph's ministry terminated in certain 'painful disclosures' as to his immoral life, and he was dismissed in 1808, withdrawing with a number of his supporters who were satisfied of his 'penitence' to a chapel in Russell Street.

At last the eighty-strong congregation at Bethesda called a suitable pastor in the person of the Rev. P. S. Charrier who came from Lancaster Independent church and served in Liverpool from 1809 till his death in 1826. Mr Charrier, a gentleman of Hug^uenot ancestry, and a decided Calvinist, had a formal, polished, ceremonious manner, a deep double-bass voice and a most uncertain temper (18). He was however a friend both of Raffles and of William Roby of Manchester, and was well-known in the Lancashire Congregational Union which he served as secretary from 1817 to 1826, contributing greatly to the revival of Independency in Lancashire. Thus the Bethesda congregation, though somewhat stiff and old-fashioned in its Calvinism, was drawn fully into the life of the wider denomination.

Charrier was succeeded in 1827 by the Rev. John Kelly who ministered in Liverpool till his death in 1873. Kelly, a young, quick-witted and

argumentative Scotsman, fresh from the Idle Academy, was likewise a representative of the old, unbending Scotch Calvinism which contrasted so strongly with the warm Evangelicalism of Thomas Raffles. "His creed", declared The Porcupine (19) "is probably not far from that of the Westminster divines". His pulpit delivery was solemn, composed and impressive, but lacking in ease and imagination (20), the sole objects of his ministry "the twin dispensations of mercy, the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints". His preaching became, in the general opinion of the city, more curiously antiquated as the years went by (21).

It was thus no accident that Kelly was in later years best remembered for the rôle he played in one of the more celebrated heresy trials of the nineteenth century. As a member of the Executive Committee of the County Union, he more than any other was responsible for the proceedings against Professor Davidson in 1856, and was also the author of the inquisitors' apologetic, 'An Examination of the Facts, Statements and Explanations' (1857). What had apparently offended Kelly was Davidson's doctrine of inspiration, his rejection of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the 'mawkish sentimentality' of his opinions in general (22).

Unfortunately, this unhappy controversy has diverted attention from the more important and enduring aspects of Kelly's work, his rôle as an outspoken political dissenter, and his work for his own church in Liverpool.

As a politician Kelly first became notorious for his pamphlet of 1838 on the Voluntary Support of the Christian Ministry, an attack on the views of Canon McNeile, the evangelical Anglican leader. As a result of this Kelly formed the Young Men's Voluntary Church Association which made a deal of noise for a few years and which he revitalised by his pamphlet on 'The Hindrances which Civil Establishments present to the progress of Genuine Religion' in 1840. Another pamphlet controversy followed with the Rev. David Jones of Kirkdale which terminated with Kelly's 'Church Catechism' (1843). After this his political dissent dropped into the background of his activities.

Meanwhile Bethesda church under his leadership continued in a most flourishing state. In 1837, acting on the conviction that the existing Congregational churches were too crowded together in the centre of the town, a move was made out to Everton Brow where the magnificent Crescent church was opened in November of the same year, at a cost of £9,000, Bethesda being disposed of to the New Connexion Methodists for £1,900. Sunday and day schools were opened in Circus Street in 1840, and the Crescent Day Schools were erected in William Henry Street in 1846 at a cost of £7,000. They provided for 800 scholars and were among the largest in Liverpool. By this time the membership of Crescent chapel stood at 400, though it is a measure of the social mobility of the time that Kelly had actually received more than twice this number into membership.

In his relations with other churches Kelly showed himself far from the reactionary bigot many imagined him to be. He was in fact the proponent of the idea that in the light of New Testament evidence the several Congregational churches of the city should regard themselves as but branches of one local church, a principle which he even extended to the suggestion of a 'group ministry'. Such a scheme which would involve a recognition that the individual churches were mere "ecclesiolae in ecclesia" would be revolutionary enough today: within the Congregationalism of the mid-nineteenth century it could not possibly find favour, and Kelly's pamphlet 'Church Principles' (1863) was largely disregarded. His enthusiasm for church extension was however taken up by his congregation which during his ministry not merely opened a mission in China Street (1864), but generously supported the waning causes in Newington and Hanover Street, and founded branch churches at Huyton (1850), Norwood (1862), Burlington Street (1859) and Brownlow Hill (1868).

All this signified a congregation which possessed both vision and the means to give effect to such far-reaching schemes, and, indeed, for wealth and civic distinction Kelly's congregation was second to none, and certainly far ahead of its sister church in Great George Street. Here for example sat Bartin Haigh, one of Liverpool's most prosperous builders, Dr Blackburn, the eminent surgeon and town councillor, whom we shall meet again as the chief Liberal spokesman on educational questions in the late 1830s, Charles Robertson, ships chandler, Liberal

representative for Abercomby ward and one of the party's best orators, James Stitt who represented St Paul's, iron merchant, shipowner and, like his minister, a native of Scotland, William Lassell F.S.A., the astronomer, John Thornley, another leading educationalist, John J. Stitt, the advanced social reformer who introduced cabmen's shelters into Liverpool and became prominent in temperance and educational controversy in the 60s and 70s, Alfred King, the mathematician, Isaac Oliver Jones, the wealthy conveyancer, Charlton R. Hall, of Cheshire yeoman stock but now a winebroker and another active Liberal, John Hope Simpson, 'the Napoleon of Liverpool finance' who owed his rise to the position of General Manager of the Bank of Liverpool largely to Samuel Smith, James Cooban, timber merchant, and Thomas Cook, Architect, the secretary of the church and later alderman of Birkenhead. It was a rare assemblage of wealth and talent, yet, it should be remarked, even before Kelly's resignation it had begun to disperse. Crescent, which had once stood amid green fields, was by 1860 itself a town church, and beginning to experience all the trials of a rapidly changing environment (23). Income fell off sharply from £3,350 in 1862 to £1,698 a decade later; above all, the wealthy families were beginning to withdraw, some to Birkenhead, others further afield. A surprising number died out altogether, many joined other denominations: most of the Stitts reverted to their Presbyterian allegiance, the Coobans, and later J. A. Picton, conformed. Somehow we are dimly conscious that in the middle decades of the century Congregationalism slipped from the forefront to a more subordinate position in the social and political life of Liverpool Nonconformity, a process accelerated by the deaths of Raffles and Kelly who had done so much to give prestige to the denomination. The truth of Sir Edward Russell's dictum - that the strength of a congregation in a town where church loyalties were so loose depended entirely on the personal magnetism of the preacher - was being only too unhappily exemplified amongst the followers of the Congregational way.

Before leaving Crescent chapel, some mention should be made of the curious little congregation which had followed the Reverend Ralph out into the wilderness in 1808, if only because its history shows how blurred and uncertain were ecclesiastical distinctions in those days, and how liable in consequence to produce villainy and fraud. Ralph's flock

established itself, as we have seen, in Salem, Russell Street, in 1808, where they remained for four years. Then the Rev. Thomas Pearson, an ex-auctioneer and an Anglican clergyman of dubious credentials arrived, named the chapel St Clement's, and introduced the liturgy. The church appears at this time to have been associated with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. On Pearson's resignation, the Rev. Thomas Stretton M.A., appeared on the scene, actually purchased the chapel from the witless congregation and renovated the whole building. It was re-opened with great pomp, choral antiphonal services were introduced, vergers in purple gowns and armed with white wands conducted worshippers to their seats. Unfortunately, however, Stretton was a complete mountebank, and having once been recognised for what he was - a Manx barber - he disappeared, leaving an enormous burden of debt. The Rev. William Crookenden, formerly curate of All Saints, saved the situation, and after his short ministry (1819-20), the Rev. James Widdows restored the church to the Congregational order, abandoned the liturgy and the surplice (24) and in 1829 persuaded the congregation to remove from Salem (which was thus prepared for another monstrous ecclesiastical fraud -- Bishop West's Primitive Episcopal Church) to the chapel in Gloucester Street, formerly held by the Scots Burghers. Here Mr Widdows ministered till 1838, when he resigned. Two years later the congregation dispersed, and Gloucester Street became the parish church of St Silas.

Newington and Great George Street represent one line of Congregational development, Bethesda, Crescent, Russell and Gloucester Street chapels another. A third, quite distinct, process, resulted in the foundation of the present Berkeley Street cause. This arose out of the so-called 'Tent Methodist' movement, launched by Messrs Pocock and Pyer of Bristol who in 1823 sent a young man, George Smith, to Liverpool with instructions to start tent meetings in a poor area of the town. Smith, later to become famous as Dr Smith of Poplar, and to occupy the position of Secretary of the Congregational Union for eighteen years, was a brilliant leader and was soon able to form a church in a room in Heath Street, Dr Raffles having given valuable assistance to the work (25). Smith was ordained as pastor, and in 1827 moved with his flock to a new building at the corner of Mill and Warwick Streets, known as Hanover chapel.

From here, having seen his work firmly established, Mr Smith removed in 1833 to similar missionary work in Plymouth. From this point onwards the Hanover cause sank into a decline, and became locally notorious as an example of the Congregationalists' failure to reach the working classes. A succession of ministers came and went again, usually in despair: indeed for a few months in 1840 the chapel closed its doors completely (26). Eventually, when the church had been gutted by fire in 1856, it was decided to build again in a slightly more respectable neighbourhood, and with the generous help of Great George Street, a £2,500 church was built in Berkeley Street in 1857. Even here however a marked lack of success was encountered, and in 1863, because of their declining condition the congregation petitioned successfully to become a branch mission of Great George Street.

The fourth and final aspect of Congregational development in this period is the founding of suburban churches, often in areas where population growth was anticipated rather than actualised. (This wisdom in the strategy of their church building happily distinguishes the Congregationalists of this period from the leaders of many other denominations). The first of these new churches, Toxteth Park, was built by Mr William Kaye, a wealthy Manchester manufacturer who had moved to Liverpool in 1823 and become a member of Crescent chapel. Toxteth Park was given by Mr Kaye as a thank-offering for his safe-deliverance from an attack by highwaymen: the building was completed by 1831 (27), and a church formed in 1833. The population of this area was by then increasing rapidly, and the church flourished from the very start, particularly under the Revs. W. P. Appleford (1840-54) and J. Wishart M.A. (1865-80). By 1872 it had in fact grown so large that the present Toxteth church was built, a stone's throw away from the Ancient Chapel, which many Congregationalists still argued was rightfully theirs.

A year before Toxteth Park church was built, work had been commenced in Kirkdale, then a village of 2-3,000 inhabitants, two miles to the north of Liverpool, on the initiative of both Crescent and Great George Street chapels. A congregational church was opened in October 1829, with the Rev. Joshua Tunstall M.A., of Airedale College, as missionary pastor. The original church of eight persons had soon grown so large that by 1836 it was able to dispense with aid from the County Union, and support itself.

Tunstall remained minister till 1858, during which time he also endeavoured to commence work in Bevington Hill and Bootle.

At Bevington Hill his efforts were for a time successful and a congregation of 150 persons was soon assembling in hired rooms. It proved impossible to form a church however, and by 1837 the cause had merged with the Kirkdale church. The work at Bootle was even more ephemeral.

The church at Wavertree likewise arose in this period, and was due to the initiative of the Rev. Thomas Sleigh who had come to live in this village in retirement in 1836. By 1838 his followers were so numerous that Trinity chapel, Hunter Lane (the first local Congregational church to be designed in Gothic style) was built and opened a year later (28). A church was formed in 1841, and both under Mr Sleigh who ministered till 1843 and his successors developed very successfully.

Sleigh was likewise responsible for the Waterloo cause. Here he began services in a hired room in 1855, and had oversight of the mission till 1857. With generous aid from the County Union the church under the Rev. G. K. Walker (1858-64) so prospered that in 1866 a fine new chapel costing £6,500 and seating 630 was built as the most northerly outpost of Liverpool Congregationalism.

The missionary enthusiasm which seemed to inspire the laymen of so many churches in the 1850s was likewise responsible for the opening of four other chapels in the neighbourhood of Liverpool. Huyton (which is outside the limits of this history) was pioneered by some lay members of Crescent chapel in 1850, while the cause at Stanley arose in 1853 out of cottage preaching by two prominent Congregational laymen, C. R. Hall of Crescent, and J. A. Picton of Wavertree, ably supported by Reginald Ratcliffe. A small school and chapel were erected in 1855, and the first minister, the Rev. C. Green, called in 1857. Edge Hill church was established originally as a mission in Goulden Street in 1857, by laymen from Great George Street. The work was then transferred to Juno Street in 1860, where however it failed to prosper in so poor a neighbourhood. On the point of its being abandoned, the efforts of Mr Mitchell, another full-time lay evangelist of Crescent chapel, and the financial backing of Mr William Crosfield, enabled the struggling cause to rent a chapel in Chatham Place in 1868, and to call the Rev. J. Alder Davies.

as minister a year later. One other church owed its origin to the joint efforts of Crescent and Great George Street: a small chapel in Burlington Street, originally used by the Welsh Methodists, was purchased in 1859, and the Rev. James Mahood, for many years a town missionary in the area, ordained as pastor of a church of 61 members in December 1861.

Not all the village causes established in these decades were however destined to endure. Woolton for example had been evangelised as early as 1819, and with the aid of the County Union and the support of the Revs. Raffles and Charrier, a room had been opened the following year. Despite the efforts of the first two evangelists, the Rev. Charles Whitworth (1819-22) and the Rev. John Holroyd (1862-3), eagerly assisted by the young people of the Liverpool churches who came out regularly to conduct the Sunday School and distribute tracts, the cause failed to prosper, and after 1825 is not heard of again. Similarly, the preaching station at Knotty Ash established in 1823 by the evangelistically-minded laymen of Crescent and Great George Street, similarly faded out after 1827, whilst that at Garston had an even more shadowy existence.

It can hardly be denied however that the 'cottage' or 'village' preaching which is such a feature of Lancashire Congregationalism at this time not only sharply distinguishes their denomination from other, less adventurous bodies (only the Wesleyans can really show anything approximating to it), but would in the future contribute immensely to the strength of the Independent denomination when, as discerning people foresaw, the town boundaries extended to these villages and beyond, and churches already settled and flourishing were absorbed into the religious life of a teeming city. The thirty years between 1830 and 1860 may indeed have seen no developments of any note in the town of Liverpool itself, (29), but this response to the needs of the outlying districts demonstrates that the pristine evangelistic zeal had not faded away, but merely been diverted, largely through the agency of laymen, to other fields.

One concluding feature of Congregational expansion during these sixty years deserves mention, and that is the extent to which it was based on deliberate planning, and was largely due to the intelligent co-operation of the churches on both a county and district level. The extent of organisation among the Independent churches at this time is

surprising (particularly if contrasted with the anarchical conditions which prevailed among the Baptists). Liverpool had played little part in the actual founding of the Lancashire Congregational Union in 1806: David Bruce alone had witnessed the original Association Deed of 1786, and only John Ralph of Bethesda had signed the Deed of Union in 1806, but, as has been observed, these omissions had certainly been compensated for by the labours of Charrier, Raffles and Kelly, on behalf of the County Union. When in 1817 the Union was divided into four districts, one of which was Liverpool, a heightened sense of unity among the churches was engendered as ministers and laymen from the town's congregations met regularly to discuss common matters, particularly the needs of unevangelised areas. In 1835 Raffles and Kelly had formed another body, 'The Associated Pastors and Deacons of the Independent Churches in Liverpool and its Vicinity', to meet four times a year to discuss the spiritual condition of each church, educational and missionary work, cottage meetings, and the acquisition of suitable sites. Within a short time a 'Look Out Committee' had been convened to serve the last-named purpose. This later developed into the Church and Mission Extension Committee, and later on the Liverpool Chapel Building Society. Other bodies formed in this period include the Church Aid Committee (1842), the Liverpool Lay Agency Association, a lay preachers' organisation, founded in 1850, the Young People's and Missionary Committees, all springing up independently, but all gradually brought under the aegis of the Liverpool (later Merseyside) Congregational Council, the name by which the body founded by Raffles and Kelly in 1835 was eventually known (30). Unity, the Independents of Liverpool had learnt quite early in their history, spelled strength, and strength particularly in the realm of finance where the burden of chapel debts was a far less terrifying nightmare to the Congregationalists than it was to most others.

B) A Decade of Progress (1860-70).

In 1862 a great assembly of Liverpool Congregationalists was convened to commemorate in a suitable fashion the Great Ejection two hundred years previously. It was agreed that a special financial effort be made to replace the temporary buildings now serving the numerous village churches on the outskirts of Liverpool with permanent

structures, and also to break fresh ground wherever possible. Four new or potential causes were subsequently listed and assigned grants - West Derby (£1,000), Stanley (£700), Waterloo (£600), and Woolton (£400). Other churches would benefit if more money could be raised. This local activity must be set in the context of a deepening concern felt by the County Union for extension in the towns, evidenced especially by the programmes of the Congregational Chapel Building Society (1852) and the Jubilee Committee (1855) (31). As a consequence of these movements, church extension in the 1860s proceeded rapidly, an average of one new chapel per year being built in Liverpool or its environs.

Norwood church came first. Several members of Crescent chapel in 1862 decided to form a committee and utilise to the best advantage the £1,000 made available for work in West Derby. The foundation stone of a new church was laid in February of that year, Dr Raffles preaching what transpired to be his last sermon on that occasion. The total cost of the building was £7,366 and it had seating for 750. Several prominent members of Crescent church transferred here, including J. J. Stitt, and Kelly's project for a joint pastorate with Crescent was operated during the initial ministry, that of the Rev. Joseph Shilito (1864-70), but was abandoned on his departure. Shilito proved an excellent choice for what is always a most difficult task, and his church had soon become one of the strongest in suburban Congregationalism. The cause at Woolton was revived three years after the founding of Norwood. Work was recommenced here by Wavertree chapel in a hired room, with the Rev. E. K. Evans as missionary. A permanent structure seating 450 was built at a cost of £3,250 in 1865. A church was formally constituted in 1867 and the Rev. William Davies, B.A., of Lancashire College was ordained and inducted on the same occasion. Mr Davies who remained here till his death in 1893 established the church on a very strong foundation, and it became one of the most useful, if unspectacular of the suburban churches. The year 1865 also saw the erection of a permanent building to consolidate the work at Stanley. This cause, despite generous help from Union funds, had struggled through some difficult times, with the defection of its first minister, the Rev. C. Green, to the Established Church in 1859, and the tragically short ministry of his successor, the Rev. William Sanders (1859-63). In the Rev. George Lord

however, pastor for over 30 years, the church found a leader ideally suited to establish it on a firm footing. His first action was to acquire a site, and see to the erection of a new £3,800 chapel, to seat 750, opened in November 1865. The same year the church declared itself independent of aid from County funds, and from that point Mr Lord's large and enthusiastic congregation went from strength to strength.

Two new churches were built in 1866; an imposing structure at Waterloo, costing £6,500 and seating 630, a magnificent gesture of faith on the part of the local congregation which was small and pastorless, but one justified by the subsequent prosperity of the church, and another building to serve a new cause at Chadwick Mount. Here, in this rapidly expanding district of Everton Valley a church hall was erected, costing £1,500 and seating 400. Under the careful guidance of the Rev. John Jones, the church gradually increased in numbers, and in 1870 was practically rebuilt at a cost of £3,000, the seating capacity being increased to 650. Edge Hill received its new building in 1868. This infant church too, as we have seen, had passed through some very troublous times, but the purchase of a fairly new chapel from the Methodist New Connexion in 1868 helped to revive the faltering cause. Under the leadership of the Rev. J. Alder Davies (1869-76) a church of 44 members (mainly from Great George Street Church) was formed in 1871, and so rapidly did the work expand after this date, that the foundation stone of a brand new building was laid in Marmaduke Street in 1874. The cost of this project (£7,500) was partly met from the proceeds of the sale of Newington chapel. Edge Hill however lacked the usual sprinkling of richer members, and was almost entirely lower middle-class and artisan in composition. Thus, although the area grew very rapidly in the 1870s, the church was not completed till 1879, and even then remained saddled with a burdensome debt, only extinguished in 1884. Without generous aid from the County Union (£1,757 was expended between 1869 and 1902) it would certainly have perished.

Missionary work in depressed areas, commenced, as we have seen, in the 1850s, was continued in the following decade alongside the more solid suburban extension. Berkeley Street, Bevington Hill and Burlington Street continued to pursue useful, if somewhat chequered courses. Great George Street in 1864 erected a mission and a Ragged School in Greenland Street in memory of its late pastor, and the mission proved in later years

of very great benefit to a destitute neighbourhood. Similar work was commenced by Crescent chapel in China Street at the same time, though this proved more difficult to maintain, and had been abandoned by 1870. Finally, a mission was launched in 1868 in the Brownlow Hill area in one of the blackspots of the Liverpool slums. This was a magnificently heroic gesture on the part of Crescent chapel which in this year took over a derelict Welsh church and agreed to support the Rev. C. Brewster, a Methodist, as missionary. A church of 32 members was formed in 1871, and Brewster, with the generous backing of the County Union, laboured strenuously, but largely unavailingly to increase his flock till he resigned in 1880.

In the midst of all this impressive progress in the 1860s, and the continuing success of the older churches (Wavertree, for example, under the Rev. E. Hassan (1862-87) had to be enlarged no less than three times at a total cost of £4,000), it is a sad fact that Liverpool Congregationalism failed at the one point where success was most desirable, at Great George Street, still looked up to with filial respect by the numerous daughter churches scattered throughout the town.

The Rev. Enoch Mellor was appointed Raffles' successor in 1862. A greater contrast between two men can hardly be imagined, for, in place of the generous, ecumenically-minded Raffles, the pulpit of Great George Street was now occupied by a blunt, dogmatic Yorkshireman, of uncertain temper and combative disposition. It was not his renowned theological conservatism (32) which gave offence - in this he upheld what was now, and remained, a characteristic of Liverpool Congregationalism (33), but his political Dissent. On his arrival in the town he had entered into a disagreeable controversy with an Anglican incumbent on the Establishment question, just the sort of thing which a congregation such as his own was anxious to avoid. Indeed Mr Mellor soon found to his astonishment that political Dissent, a natural attitude in Yorkshire, was by the 1860s anathema in Liverpool, and so betook himself on weekdays to Batley and similar places where he could crusade against the evils of Establishment with some chance of securing an audience (34). "Halifax", as Porcupine remarked (35), "may like this sort of religious radicalism. Liverpool does not".

These activities quickly produced an estrangement between Mellor and his congregation. The affairs of the new Greenland Street mission were not going at all well, and Mellor seized the opportunity to tax the congregation with meanness (an odd charge from one who was in receipt of the princely stipend of £1,000 p.a.). This unpleasant controversy spread to the local press, and in 1867 Mellor was relieved of his pastoral duties. His final sermon was characteristic - a whining indictment of all who had criticised him for his ministerial failings (36). The rapid decline of Great George Street in numbers and in public esteem may be dated from this disastrous pastorate.

C) Congregationalism Reaches Its Zenith (1870-85).

The hectic expansion of the 1860s had left in its wake a considerable burden of debt, and in October 1871 a meeting was held at Great George Street to decide on the best means of continuing the work of expansion through the coming decades, and eliminating the £25,000 owing on the new churches. The result was that the old Chapel Fund Association was re-organised as the Liverpool Congregational Chapel Building Society, and an appeal made for £5,000 towards debt reduction. Within a year half this sum had been found, and by 1877 the burden of debt stood at only £16,000. By 1885, following on a special appeal to commemorate the centenary of Newington chapel (1877) by a further financial effort, this considerable sum had been defrayed altogether. This was quite an achievement in view of the fact that by this date several new churches had been erected, not all of which had been paid for by the time of their opening, and which cost in all a sum not far short of the £16,000 which had to be cleared.

In 1871 a new church hall was erected at Walton at a cost of £1,566, subsequently enlarged twice at a further cost of £2,000. A church of 15 members was constituted in 1871, and this number increased tenfold during the initial pastorate, that of the Rev. J. W. Clark (1872-80). Two years later aid from the County Union was dispensed with, and yet another new church had been safely launched on a prosperous career in a developing suburb.

Work was commenced in Bootle in the same year, largely through the efforts of Stanley Church. A church of 24 members was formed in a mission room in 1872, and so successful was the cause under the leadership of its first pastor, the Rev. G. P. Jarvis (1872-4) that the foundation stone of Emmanuel Congregational church was laid in October of the latter year. The church, which seated 750 and cost £7,500, was opened in February 1876, schools and a hall being added two years later. During the twenty years' ministry of the Rev. Thomas Dunlop congregational strength rose to 420, and by the turn of the century Bootle had become one of the Liverpool District's most thriving churches. Meanwhile, the Kirkdale congregation, having long been dissatisfied with their existing premises, opened a new church in Westminster Road in 1872. Once again this was a remarkable gesture of faith on the part of the congregation, for this £7,000 building stood in the middle of a field, with not a single house visible. They were correct however in presuming that before long this area would become one of the most populous in Liverpool.

At the south end of the town the village of Garston had long presented a problem to Liverpool Congregationalists, and in 1875 the County Union decided to revive preaching on the itinerancy system, which had been so successful in the early part of the century, and open up evangelistic work in this working-class township. Ditton Hall was taken and a Sunday School commenced, together with preaching services for the Welsh and Irish labourers who cared to attend. A church of 16 members was formed in 1876, and a building to seat 300 was erected at a cost of £2,370 on the outskirts of Garston in 1883. This unique effort in evangelism had thus justified itself.

It was however in the area far to the north of Liverpool which was now beginning to rival the Wirral as a residential area for the town's middle-class citizens that Congregationalism, following on the growth of the Waterloo church in the

1870s, achieved its most substantial success during the ensuing decade. The cause at Seaforth was planted by the Waterloo church in 1878. Under the leadership of the Rev. W. L. Roberts a chapel was erected in 1882, to seat 250 and costing £2,090, and a church formally constituted in 1883. A year later Congregationalism made another advance into these pleasant residential suburbs to the north of Liverpool. A school-chapel was erected in Crosby in 1884, to seat 350, and at a cost of £4,300. The architectural beauty, as well as the physical comfort and the amenities of this building, and even more so of the church eventually built in 1897, were purposely aimed at the population of this neighbourhood. A cultured young minister, the Rev. T. H. Darlow, M.A., was engaged as the church's first pastor, the seatholding system was introduced, and soon all the pews had been rented, and visitors were being turned away. The church soon came to occupy a foremost place in the religious life of the rising municipality, and the young people of the congregation in 1888 launched a novel experiment in social and missionary work at Sandhills where the Crosby Mission House, with a warden and sub-warden as permanent staff, was established and maintained at considerable expense.

The success of Congregationalism in the northern outskirts of the town had been spectacular, but other areas were not forgotten: mission services were commenced at Knotty Ash, mainly by the Stanley church in 1883, and a school chapel to seat 200 erected at a cost of £2,000 in 1884. The Rev. J. W. Walker was chosen as first minister and as assistant to the Rev. G. Lord of the mother church. Finally, in 1885, a curious, triangular-shaped piece of land was acquired in Hartington Road, and a chapel to seat 300 and costing £4,500 opened the same year. A church of 50 members under the leadership of the Rev. W. L. Roberts, formerly of the Seaforth church, was formed in 1886. Within six years this figure had doubled, a characteristic of most of the new churches founded in this era of dynamic expansion.

Liverpool Congregationalists, though they could hardly be expected to have realised the same, had by 1885 reached their apogee, and before turning to the critical decades of frustration and unrealised hopes which followed, it would perhaps be advantageous to enquire further as to the social composition of the denomination which had canalised its spiritual resources into such intelligent schemes of church extension. The social pre-eminence which Liverpool Independency had attained in the 1830s and 40s, had long been on the wane, nor, for the spiritual health of the denomination was this perhaps an unfortunate process - certainly the Presbyterians' record for church expansion was less impressive despite the far greater resources at their disposal and the greater civic prominence of their leading men. Indeed, an examination of the social structure of most Congregational churches at this time reveals what Porcupine found [\] a propos the Norwood church in 1873 - half a dozen fairly wealthy adherents, the rest solidly and decently bourgeois, shading off into respectable artisanry at the lower end, the whole breathing an air of ease and intelligence, and enjoying an annual church income of £1,262, of which about £350 went to the minister's stipend. An enquiry into the background of those men most prominent in the counsels of local Congregationalism at this period is equally suggestive. G. B. Crowe, Canadian by birth and head of the small shipping firm of Crowe, Rudolf and Co., vice-chairman of the Dockboard and later mayor of Birkenhead, Nathaniel Topp, the Farnworth-born cotton broker, Liberal Councillor for St Paul's ward, and prominent in re-housing schemes and slum clearance, Shorrocks Eccles, hailing originally from Darwen, a partner in Alexander Eccles and Co., cotton-brokers, J. W. Reader, cottonbroker turned estate-agent, prominent in the Lay Preachers' Association and President of the Liverpool Property Owners, J. Carlton Stitt, son of J. J. Stitt, and a marine engineer, Samuel Job, the Liberal shipowner who hailed originally from Devon and whose sons now shared with Bowring and Co. the major part of the

Newfoundland trade, and Elisha Smith, who exemplifies nineteenth-century Congregationalism at its very best, a small merchant, active Liberal and philanthropist, founder of the Police-aided Association for Clothing Destitute Children, deeply interested in popular culture and vice-chairman of both the Philharmonic and Philomathic societies - such were the men who rose to leadership within the denomination at this time. Above all, occupying a place of acknowledged primacy, were the Crosfields, father and son. William Crosfield senior, ex-Quaker, member of Great George Street chapel, treasurer of the Liverpool District of the Lancashire Congregational Union, head of the firm of Crosfield and Company, wholesale grocers, and subsequently a sugar-refiner on his own account, retiring and reticent, yet a generous philanthropist and Liberal representative for Castle Street ward from 1875 till his death in 1881, played a role in the life of the city very similar to that of his son, William Crosfield junior, who succeeded him both in the now extensive family business of sugar-refining, soap manufacturing and rice-milling, and as representative for the Castle Street ward, and later became an energetic promotor of Ragged Schools, and Liberal M.P. for Lincoln from 1892 to 1895.

Reducing the sociological problem however to its most mercenary terms, the Crosfields who were looked up to in any financial appeal on the part of the local churches, and who were always far ahead of others in the extent of their giving, were not conspicuously wealthy men. William Crosfield senior died worth £120,000, a sum trifling by Presbyterian or even Wesleyan standards. The role of the Crosfields within the evolution of Liverpool Congregationalism is eloquent also as to the denomination's status within the social structure of the urban community.

D) The Uneasy Decades (1886-1914)

During the thirty year period before the outbreak of the First World War Congregational chapel building slowed down considerably, and this corresponded also to a gradual stabilization

of membership figures which had reached such unprecedented heights in the 1870's. New churches were still being founded nonetheless - Rice Lane, Walton, a cause pioneered in 1890 by the Rev. L. Weaver in an old police-station, where growth however proved not as easy as in former decades, for despite a generous series of annual grants from the County Union the church was never able to support itself independently and was eventually disbanded. Oakvale too was commenced in 1913 by J. M. Riddell, and a temporary church hall erected just before the outbreak of the First World War. Missionary expansion likewise, so characteristic of the whole of Liverpool Nonconformity in the 80's and 90's was certainly not neglected by the Congregationalists. Norwood church for example had in 1880 founded a mission in Boaler Street at a cost of £1,000. So successful had the work proved that under the lay superintendency of Mr. J. Middleton the premises had to be enlarged in 1887 and again in 1891. Chalmers Hall was erected by the Westminster Road church in 1882, soon became one of the most flourishing missionary stations in the city, and acquired an impetus which enabled it to survive down to the mid-twentieth century. The Bootle church established a mission in Marsh Lane in 1886 at a cost of £1,800, while a mission room at Old Swan was opened by the Stanley church in 1891.

During these years over £40,000 was expended in the building of churches to replace church halls, to build schools, or completely to renovate old property. New buildings were thus erected at Hartington Road (1896), Crosby (1897), and Seaforth (1899); others underwent extensive adaptations and repairs.

All these activities should not be allowed however to obscure the fact that Congregationalism at this time was beginning to suffer setbacks even in fields where it had achieved notable success in former years. Congregationalists might well argue that they had no need to build extensively in the suburbs, having taken care in the past to anticipate the advance of the city's boundaries by building chapels in the surrounding townships. This

was true enough, but did not explain the complete failure to establish a new cause at Aintree, and the even more conspicuous débâcle at Aigburth, a growing middle-class suburb where a site was secured in 1882 but where, despite an annual grant from the County Union, a congregation simply could not be gathered, the site itself being disposed of 10 years later. Even more significant was the collapse of several missions in working class areas of the city. Berkeley Street for example, having relegated itself to the status of a mission of Great George Street in 1864, became independent again in 1867, but was so reduced by 1898 that it only continued to exist thanks to a generous annual subvention from the County Union. Meanwhile Brownlow Hill, on which the Union had expended nearly £1,000, closed its doors on a hopelessly unrewarding task in 1892, Burlington Street which had likewise received a series of very large grants (£1,384 in all) and had been worked both as a branch of the Town Mission and by the members of the Huyton church, was closed in 1894, and Wellington Road, a mission founded by the Wavertree church in 1878, was abandoned a little later.

The churches of the middle-class suburbs continued of course to flourish, and many of them during this period, particularly Norwood under its distinguished minister, the Rev. E. R. Barratt (1880-1899) drew very large congregations, and yet several churches, including some of recent date, were by now 'down-town' causes, suffering seriously from the inevitable drift of population outwards, and the loss of members to the newer churches on the Wirral. Three churches however reacted with remarkable vigour to their changing environments, and called to their pulpits pastors who not only became pulpit giants in their own right, but whose contrasting ministries provide an intriguing snap-shot of urban Congregationalism at the turn of the century.

The first church so to act was Crescent, by now a declining cause in the city's inner belt which engaged as its minister the Rev. Robert Veitch M.A. of Rochdale, in 1894⁽³⁷⁾. Anxious to make

his church the spiritual centre of the community around it, and not merely a place of worship for a handful of middle-class worshippers travelling in each Sunday from afar, he reshaped the pattern of worship at Crescent drastically to meet the changed conditions of the times, holding 'open' worship on Sunday evenings, introducing Christian Endeavour and Pleasant Sunday Afternoon meetings, a Men's Forum, a Tontine and Benefit Society, free Sunday morning breakfasts, and various youth organizations which soon commanded a total adherence of 1,400 - all the accoutrements, in other words, of that ecclesiastical phenomenon of the 90's - the Institutional Church. Yet it was not for these activities that Veitch obtained the degree of local distinction which was his, for, with Aked of the Baptists and Armstrong of the Unitarians, he was the co-editor of the Liverpool Pulpit, a journal which in the early 90's was the organ of the Social Gospel in the city. Yet Veitch, advanced political Liberal though he was, was sharply distinguished from most of the advocates of the Social Gospel by the moderate orthodoxy of his religious beliefs. For though the harmonization of radical politics and a fairly conservative theology was a common intellectual attitude among many young Anglican and Wesleyan clergymen of this period⁽³⁸⁾, it was most untypical of the older Dissent where a petrifyingly rationalist outlook became only too common. Veitch however, though he preached rarely on the "more difficult metaphysic" of the New Testament, attached 'fossilised' Bible-worship and 'unprogressive' dogma, and was obviously affected by the 'spiritualising' tendencies of this particular period of Congregationalism, rejected firmly the allurements of Harnack and Ritschl, and stood firm on the main tenets of the Faith, as his surviving printed sermons make clear. Though this attitude undoubtedly cost him the allegiance of many young middle-class folk, for whom religious liberalism was at this time as attractive as it is today incomprehensible, Veitch showed in many ways his preference for the old paths: 'the finding of God and the service of man' became his

oft-avowed ideals, and there is a world of difference between such a declaration of principle and Aked's sub-Christian slogan, borrowed from Mazzini, "we worship God by serving Man".

If Veitch's task at Crescent was a hard one, that of the Rev. J. K. Nuttall at Great George Street was formidable indeed. This church had never really recovered from the disastrous pastorate of Enoch Mellor, while his successor, the Rev. Samuel Pearson M.A. (1869-1888), despite the very interesting picture of his work in Liverpool which he gives in his book 'Service in Three Cities', was a commonplace, uninspired man, described by the unkindly Porcupine as a 'sphinx' or 'automaton'⁽³⁸⁾ and by the Liberal Review⁽³⁹⁾ as 'respectable, sensible, and wanting in impressiveness'. In consequence, when his successor, the Rev. J. K. Nuttall, arrived in 1891, he was to find a congregation reduced to one-sixth of its former strength, and a gaunt, smoke-blackened church situated in a depressed and increasingly Irish-Catholic neighbourhood. Nuttall's solution was Veitch's - the Institutional Church. Making himself familiar in the neighbourhood by his appearance on a bicycle (an unusual piece of equipment for a Christian minister in those days), Nuttall soon had established the most successful P.S.A. in Liverpool (1,200 strong), all the types of societies we have seen flourishing at Crescent, and many more, including Wednesday evening services for shop assistants, Summer Excursions, Night school classes in French and Shorthand, a Labour Bureau and many more. Loyally Mr. Crosfield and his fellow deacons (still a socially distinguished group comprising three merchants, two doctors, one sharebroker, a cotton broker, a mining engineer, an accountant and a bank clerk) supported their young pastor, the value of whose work they clearly recognized, consented to the abandonment of the pew system and threw open the church to a type of person who had not darkened its doors for many years, if at any time. Nuttall's reputation became widespread in the denomination, and as early as 1893 he was requested to read a paper explaining his methods to the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

The areas round Crescent and Great George Street posed one set of questions and demanded the type of response given them. Kirkdale, the stronghold of respectable artizan and lower middle-class Conservatism, was a different problem altogether. But Westminster Road church also was fortunate in the minister whose forty year pastorate began there in 1872. The Rev. Stanley Rogers⁽⁴⁰⁾ was the son of Dr. Guinness Rogers, and thus brought up in the atmosphere of the aristocratic Independency of the metropolis. Revolting however against much of its pomposity and hollowness, the young Rogers had deliberately chosen to work in an area as different as possible from his youthful environment. To his work in Kirkdale he brought three stirring qualities; a vigorous, unbending Evangelicalism, and a determination to shut out the 'profane babblings' of criticism from his pulpit; a hearty dislike of clerical politicians, particularly of the 'rampant and rabid' Socialist variety (at a Congregational conference he once caused laughter when, on being asked what he would do with the slums, he replied 'build churches'), and a curiously old-fashioned Independency which took the form of a dislike of all forms of connexionalism, combined with a keen sense of the dignity of the ministerial office (he sported gown and bands when such had become extremely rare in the denomination), a most lofty conception of the pastoral ministry and a dislike of the Institutional church which extended to all organisations that "clutter up a church's life", except the Sunday School. Oddly enough, he believed that he should play a prominent part in civic affairs, continued his denomination's traditional interest in sailors and in the work of the Bethel Union, and played a notable role in educational reform, founding and becoming secretary of the Free Education Vigilance Committee whose aim it was to enforce the 1891 Compulsory Education Act in full, and prevent its abuse by sectarian interests. Curiously isolated in Nonconformist life (he was, notoriously, a moderate drinker), his best friends were Anglicans and Catholics, and in his later years he became a kind of doyen of the clergy and people of the north end of

the town. But of his success at Westminster Road in building up and maintaining a very large but far from wealthy congregation there can be no doubt.

Rogers however was untypical - perhaps uniquely so - and it was men of the Nuttall stamp who were rightly regarded as the real Congregational pioneers of the twentieth century. It was thus no accident that when in 1910 the denomination with others decided to launch a Forward Movement in the town, Great George Street was chosen as the scene of its great inaugural rally. Tremendous enthusiasm was generated, as plans to eliminate the remaining £17,000 debt on the new churches were discussed, yet over all, there hung the feeling that things were far from well. Attendances were becoming smaller, membership figures, even of great suburban churches like Norwood, were beginning to fall, the problem of working-class alienation becoming frighteningly real as one by one the missions closed their doors. Perhaps because they were more intelligent and discerning than most, Liverpool Congregationalists on the eve of the 1914 war realized how strongly the tide of secular life was running against them.

CHAPTER FIVE

BAPTISTS

AND THE DISSIDENCE OF DISSENT

Baptist growth in nineteenth century Liverpool can scarcely be compared to that of any other denomination. That the dramatic rite of believer's baptism attracts a particular psychological type, or a particular social class, or that, as seems apparent from the Liverpool evidence, Baptists do not evolve naturally from sect- to denomination- type Christianity, but waver hesitatingly between the two, are just a handful of the many deductions possible from the evidence of the present chapter. Yet their toughness is as conspicuous as their dissidence, for whether in their missionary enthusiasm, their awkward sectarianism or their zeal for good works, they are always to the fore, ready to exhaust their own energies or others' patience in the successive crises their militancy provoked. The sensitive and cultured found them repellent: of fighters, rebels, malcontents and eccentrics they were never lacking. Intolerant of organisation among themselves (in contrast to the Congregationalists, they formed no local union of churches till 1860, and no lay preachers' association till 1904), they trusted always to what one of their historians has called 'spontaneous generation', and lavished time and talents on churches which rose phenomenally and crashed to ruin almost overnight. Just as their leadership was recruited from all sorts and conditions of men, their witness seems to run the gamut of contrasting religious and social ideologies: in consequence their progress was not the carefully programmed expansion of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, but a series of breathless engagements, of attacks, glorious victories, crushing defeats and drastic withdrawals. Individualistic to excess, they are the despair of the historian who tries to extract an intelligible narrative from a tangled mass of facts rarely lending itself to coherent treatment.

A) Schisms and Removals (1800-1850)

Much of Baptist history is typified by the fate of their only chapel (if we exclude the Johnsonians) which existed in 1786. Samuel Medley had raised Byrom Street to a position of eminence in

the city, but after his death in 1799 it floundered helplessly. Medley had preached a warm Evangelical Calvinism which his contemporary Andrew Fuller was erecting into a theological system; he had however, in order not to offend hyper-Calvinist susceptibilities, never avowed himself a 'Fullerite'. His successor, Richard Davis (1800-1810) was foolish enough to do so. Even at his election thirty members who denounced him as a 'work-monger' and 'Arminian' withdrew to found a cause of their own in Church Lane. The remainder, a hundred and three in number, settled down to a particularly uncomfortable and turbulent pastorate. Davis could in fact do nothing right: in 1801 with the aid of Mr. Samuel Hope, a wealthy cotton-broker and his senior deacon, he founded a Sunday School which grew during his ministry from 100 to 718. A minority naturally objected on the usual hyper-Calvinist grounds that those whom God had predestined could not be educated into salvation by human agency, and withdrew to form a new strict and Particular Baptist Church in Stanley Street. Davis persevered however, establishing in 1805 a Baptist Day School in Circus Street, and in 1807, persuading his church to rejoin the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association after an absence of many years. Eventually however, after an unwholesome episode in which William Gadsby, the hyper-Calvinist preacher from Manchester, played no small part, Davis was offered, and accepted, a shameful bribe of £150 to resign the pastorate in 1810⁽¹⁾.

Moses Fisher, a more phlegmatic and determined individual, was chosen as his successor in 1813. He at once initiated a bold scheme of church extension into the more spiritually destitute areas of the town, carrying out extensive visitation of cellar dwellings in various parts of Liverpool, and establishing five separate Sunday Schools, out of which, he hoped, new churches would grow. He was alive also to the claims of the wider church, founding in the town a local auxiliary of the Serampore Mission in 1819, and pleading eloquently at Association meetings for bold schemes of church extension. Though fastidious persons disliked him - he was

aggressive, uncouth and shouted and gesticulated in his services - he soon came to occupy an important position in Liverpool, particularly in regard to the Liverpool Religious Tract Society and the Bethel Union. He was an eloquent advocate of the claims of Ireland, and numbered many of the Irish poor in his own congregation⁽²⁾. For twelve years moreover he held the hyper-Calvinist minority at bay till in 1825, finding that a co-pastor was necessary to cope with the increased work, they proposed for the post one of their own ilk, the Rev. John Underhill, who since 1816 had ministered to the strict Church which had met in Stanley Street since 1801, and in Sidney Place Chapel after 1824⁽³⁾.

Fisher at once resigned, taking 62 members with him, first to Cockspur Street, then to Oil Street, and finally to Soho Street where a chapel was built for him in 1837⁽⁴⁾.

Now Byrom Street was more distracted than ever, but succeeded nevertheless in attracting the services of one more excellent pastor, the Rev. Samuel Saunders (1826-1835). A solemn and learned man of similar tastes and beliefs to his predecessor, Saunders abandoned the customary political neutrality of Liverpool Dissenting ministers, and in 1833 at a meeting of the Association launched an eloquent attack on the unchristian character of the Establishment, which caused no small dismay in the town. His 'Lectures on Nonconformity' likewise achieved considerable success among the more politically conscious Dissenters⁽⁵⁾.

On Saunders' death in 1835, an even more cultured, intellectual and decidedly liberal minister was elected to the pastoral office:- C. M. Birrell. Once again the church became full to overflowing, as it had not been since Medley's time, and by 1838 Birrell felt himself strong enough to defy the hyper-Calvinists by an action which he had long been contemplating: an open appeal to all believers to partake of the Lord's Supper. At once the 'hypers' countered by inviting Underhill to Byrom Street to administer the sacrament to themselves alone. Birrell then withdrew, taking with him five-sixths of the congregation, including all the wealthy

families, the Johnsons, Medleys, Hopes, Croppers, Palethorpes and Hendersons, many of whom he had attracted to the chapel from other denominations, to a new church in Pembroke Place.

Byrom Street, now reduced to a pitiable condition, united with Underhill's congregation at Sidney Place, as an avowed Strict and Particular Baptist church. All contacts with the B.M.S. and the county Association were severed⁽⁶⁾ and the church settled down to a series of fiercely orthodox pastorates, of Underhill himself to 1840, of J. H. Thomas (1840-1842) and of William Giles junior (1842-1843) at the conclusion of whose ministry an ugly quarrel broke out and the church faced the prospect of inevitable dissolution. From this fate a most fortunate accident delivered them, for in 1848 the L.N.W.R. bought their chapel for £4,250 in order to construct a tunnel beneath it. With the sum of money thus obtained, the hyper-Calvinists betook themselves to a new chapel in Shaw Street, opened in December 1847. There they and their successors have worshipped down to the present day, completely cut off from the religious life of the city, and virtually unknown, except when their only outstanding pastor, Mr. J. K. Popham (1873-1882) entered the lists against the dangerously liberal Moody and Sankey. From that point onwards the fellowship of Baptist churches recognised them no more⁽⁷⁾.

The historic church at Byrom Street had by 1846 condemned itself to sterility: it had, however, in the process thrown up by internal dissension three new causes, all destined to surpass it in importance, Soho Street (1837), Pembroke (1838) and Lime Street which arose out of the schismatic movement to Church Lane in 1801. To these three causes we now turn.

Soho Street enjoyed the services of Moses Fisher for only three years, for he died in 1840 at the age of 64. His successor, R. B. Lancaster (1840-1848) continued his work successfully, but in the following years a series of stupid quarrels and two disastrous pastorates led to the closing of the chapel in 1854, most members transferring to other places of worship.

A happier fate attended Pembroke Chapel, opened for C. M. Birrell in 1838. Birrell in a short time became the foremost Baptist minister in the city. The Porcupine, which rarely had much good to say about clerics, once described him as 'a relic, left to impress upon the present age some idea of the past'⁽⁸⁾, but in fact it was the calm, formal seriousness, the polished accent, the gown and bands, the simple Pauline theology⁽⁹⁾, the mild Whiggism and the stiff, old-fashioned courtesy which not only distinguished him sharply from the general run of Baptist ministers, but enabled him to build up his huge congregation of 600, ~~xxx~~ 'respectables', attracting, once his church had thrown over closed membership as well as close communion in 1840, considerable numbers of other Nonconformists, and not a few converts from the Established Church. In many ways his position in the denomination was akin to that of Raffles among the Congregationalists: the two were very alike, not least in their enthusiasm for travel, and were often exchanging pulpits⁽¹⁰⁾.

The missionary and 'colonizing' efforts of Pembroke chapel during Birrell's ministry belong to a later section of this chapter, yet, till his resignation in 1872 when a grateful congregation presented him with a cheque for £2,600 (a fair estimate of its social standing within the city), his people seemed strangely unconcerned in the type of church-centred philanthropic activity which usually distinguished a prosperous congregation of this sort. By 1860 they were supporting a day school for 150 scholars, with evening classes for an additional 120, and running the usual Provident and Dorcas Societies in connection with it, but in this concern for popular education they were, rather surprisingly, typical of most large Baptist congregations of this period⁽¹¹⁾. Of other forms of social endeavour there is little evidence, but this is no doubt due to the fact that the Church's philanthropic energies tended to be concentrated in the hands of its most prominent layman, John Cropper, who had joined Birrell's congregation from the Quakers. It was this gentleman whose efforts for the poor of

Liverpool, especially chimney sweeps and workhouse children, in many ways anticipated the work of William Rathbone, who with his wife pioneered a 'Benevolent House' to secure employment for convicted young offenders, and commenced the first religious services for epileptics in the north, and who attracted all the reforming energies of Pembroke supporters, securing at the same time the admiration of outsiders for the church which the Croppers graced by their attendance⁽¹²⁾.

The congregation which removed from Byrom Street to Church Lane in 1801, after a very difficult period of unsettlement and further schism, called as their pastor in March 1803 the Rev. James Lister of Glasgow, and a few weeks later, obviously anticipating a prosperous future, purchased a plot of land in Lime Street or Lime Kiln Lane, as it was then known, on which to erect a permanent structure. Lister both lived up to their expectations and exercised a very long pastorate, actually surviving by four years the Lime Street chapel which was acquired by the Corporation in 1841 for road-widening.

A former member of the Scottish Episcopal Church who had become a Baptist while studying at Glasgow University⁽¹³⁾, Lister was a small, spare man of intellectual tastes and shy temperament. He shunned public appearances outside his own church as much as he abhorred controversy: only on one occasion, in 1820, did he produce a pamphlet - against the Socinians. Politics he eschewed altogether; perhaps, declared his friend Raffles, he was too scrupulous in their avoidance⁽¹⁴⁾. A moderate Calvinist in doctrine, he was a considerable Hebrew scholar, and declined the offer of a D.D. from two universities⁽¹⁵⁾. His church which under his guidance increased from 45 to 239 members soon lost its hyper-Calvinist taint (it joined the county Association in 1812) and, though never quite the respectable company which surrounded the far more outstanding Birrell, contained nevertheless some very remarkable men, including Edward Caerns, the great American merchant, William Rushton, an enthusiastic missionary to the poor

and the author of a notable work on 'Particular Redemption' which ran into five editions, and Joseph Baines, father of a progeny distinguished in Baptist, Anglican and academic life and who himself endeavoured to emulate for the Baptists the Independents' success in establishing village preaching stations in Bootle, West Derby and elsewhere. Politically too the chapel exerted considerable influence, the Hodsons, general merchants, the Hopes, bankers, the Alisons, corn-merchants and the Johnsons, lime-burners all being active in local Whig circles, while the Haughtons, timber merchants, were equally staunch Tories. With the help of these men Lister in 1803 established a charity school for orphan and fatherless girls attached to the chapel, and a similar institution for boys in 1816, providing lessons at 2d. or 3d. a week for over 200 children.

To the very end of his ministry doctrinal controversy was stilled: only when the chapel was acquired by the Corporation in 1843, and a decision taken to install an organ in the new building was there a serious schism. Already however the foundation stone of a magnificent new edifice to cost no less than £8,000 had been laid in Myrtle Street. The new building, described by the Liverpool Mercury as the most handsome and neatest chapel in town⁽¹⁶⁾, constructed in an elaborate, not to say singular, style of Gothic, was two years in building, and was finally opened by Lister with his friend Raffles in attendance, in January 1844. But Lister's health was now failing, and he resigned in 1847, to spend the last four years of his life ministering to the 30 members who had left him over the organ question in 1843 - for the Baptists of Liverpool seemed to patch up their quarrels as readily as they commenced them. He died, deeply lamented by the whole denomination, in 1851⁽¹⁷⁾.

A visitor to Liverpool in 1850 would have been surprised at the variety and condition of the Baptist churches which he found there. The historic Byrom Street was closed, and its successor in Shaw Street unenviably isolated from the other churches, while

Soho Street was tottering to its fall. More moderately Calvinist than either of these, the new church in Myrtle Street was settling down with some trepidation to an almost unknown young pastor, Hugh Stowell Brown. Pembroke alone, the most liberal of the churches, practising both open communion and open membership, seemed to be established on a secure and permanent footing. And if this picture were not sufficiently confusing, careful search would reveal two more Baptist congregations, as isolated from the rest as from each other, the old Johnsonian chapel in Comus Street, struggling on till its last seven members dissolved their church in 1873, and a little Scotch Baptist or McLeanite church⁽¹⁸⁾, established (such is the complexity of Baptist history) by an equal number of Welsh and English, but no Scots, in a bookseller's shop in 1793⁽¹⁹⁾, and occupying successively chapels in Matthew Street, Church Lane and Sydney Place where, never more than thirty strong, they gradually declined till the remaining twelve members quietly dispersed in 1876.

(B) Stowell Brown and W.P. Lockhart, a Study in Contrasts

If the Baptist history of Liverpool is in the second quarter of the nineteenth century dominated by the names of Saunders, Fisher, Lister and Birrell, the third belongs indisputably to two enigmatic and extraordinary men, Hugh Stowell Brown and William Peddie Lockhart.

Other Baptist ministers have had careers as distinguished as Brown's: few can have had an upbringing so egregious. The son of an impoverished and eccentric Manx clergyman, Brown had come to England at the age of 15 and worked as a land surveyor's apprentice, as a navvy and an engine driver. Coming slowly under Christian influences (he never experienced any kind of normative Evangelical conversion), he chalked his first Greek exercises on the firebox of a locomotive⁽²⁰⁾, and then, determined "to become a parson", returned to King William's College in 1843 to train for the ministry of the Established Church. But his ministerial vocation was somewhat vague, and certainly not encouraged by his father who, somewhat oddly, urged him to become a Nonconformist⁽²¹⁾. In great despondency he came to Liverpool in 1846 to resume his career as an engineer. But already a Mr Gibson, a deacon of Myrtle Street, had heard him preach in the Isle of Man⁽²²⁾, persuaded him to undergo believer's baptism (he had previously been christened as an infant and been privately baptised by his father at the age of seven), and hastily tutored him in Baptist terminology and practice - for, as Brown himself confessed, he

had before encountered only one Baptist in his whole life, and did not even know there was a Baptist church in Liverpool. It was thus a completely unknown stranger who was voted to the pastoral office at Myrtle Street in March 1847, twenty-three members only dissenting from his election.

Within a very short time Brown's figure had become a familiar sight to the inhabitants of Liverpool. His massive, burly frame, his huge forehead with a mop of untidy hair and vigorous growth of unkempt beard, his loose, ill-fitting clothes - he never wore an overcoat or carried an umbrella⁽²³⁾ - his off-hand style and gruff voice, above all the pipe everlastingly between his lips (it was a current Liverpool joke that he spent as much on tobacco as Birrell spent on starch) - all endeared him to the lower middle and artizan classes of the town, who recognized in him, quite rightly, one of their own social type.

His preaching, as we have already seen, was sternly practical, his pulpit addresses not differing materially from his homilies to working men, and was likewise directed to the commonsense rather than the emotions of his congregation. Doctrinal questions he avoided altogether - he was once tempted to advocate his friend's, Baldwin Brown's, rejection of the doctrine of eternal damnation, but it caused controversy in his church, and so he never mentioned it again⁽²⁴⁾. In truth he had read hardly any works of theology, particularly German Higher Criticism which he affected to despise; poetry and fiction he likewise neglected as he found them extremely boring⁽²⁵⁾. His sermon illustrations were in consequence drawn entirely from common life - domestic, trade and military affairs⁽²⁶⁾, and his usual practise was to take a text, and "hammer it until it could bear no more"⁽²⁷⁾. Nevertheless even in his wilder exegesis, Brown rarely lost sight of his primary aim, to instil "an earnest, everyday Christian morality". 'He takes his hearers', remarked the Liberal Review, 'to the first floor of the Christian temple - and has scarcely had time to pay much attention to the higher flights'⁽²⁸⁾. It is thus not surprising that he found the revivalism of the Second Evangelical Awakening uncongenial, and that he preferred to Moody whose bathos and sentimentality he abhorred the Parsee, Baboo Keshub Chinder Sen, whom on one occasion he invited to share his pulpit.

Brown is for his age a strangely enigmatical figure, and the question which needs to be asked is into what phase of Nonconformist development

can he possibly be fitted? But perhaps between the doctrinal evangelical preaching of the early nineteenth century, and the 'gospel preaching' of its later years, there does occur a definite, if short-lived, parenthesis, in the way of practical, moral exhortation, of which Samuel Martin of Westminster, Thomas Binney and Brown himself are the leading representatives.

If the measure of Brown's success is the extent to which his church adopted on his persuasion a whole programme of good works, then the preacher was amply rewarded. Much of its energy was taken up with the planting of churches and missions in the vicinity (and besides those numerous causes in Liverpool which will be mentioned later, Myrtle Street under Brown's ministry planted Baptist witness further afield, in St. Helens, Earlstown, Aughton, Bryn and Widnes) - but it had still plenty left for local philanthropic work. This gave rise to many institutions, a Dorcas Society, Workhouse Mission, Ragged School, Mutual Improvement Societies, a Soup Kitchen, and above all the famous Workman's Bank which arose out of personal contacts established by Brown at his Sunday afternoon lectures, and which handled over £80,000, most of it in coppers, before its operations were rendered unnecessary by the establishment of the Post Office Savings Bank. On these and allied operations, Messrs Isaac Miller and Edward Mounsey, Brown's two deacons most interested in this work, were soon spending £1000 p.a., contributed by the congregation, a sum which had reached a total of £1,375 by 1877.

The church itself, which grew from 241 members in 1847 to 839 at Brown's death in 1886, and was constantly being enlarged until by 1859 it could seat with ease 2200, contained very few persons of note in the life of the city, except for Mr W.S. Caine, son of Nathaniel Caine, the minister's brother-in-law, who later became an M.P. and like so many Evangelical members of Liverpool origin, first found a taste for rhetoric while conducting cottage meetings, a type of evangelism on which Brown was very keen, and in which he indulged frequently himself⁽²⁹⁾. The church contained few 'gloomy ascetics or selfish salvationists'⁽³⁰⁾, Brown's two pet aversions, though for many years there was a marked cleavage between the older members who had sat under Lister, orthodox, wealthy and Puritanical, and who throughout his whole ministry prevented Brown altering the deeds of the church to allow for open communion, and the younger members who, like Brown himself, accepted orthodoxy without

asking awkward questions, and were none too scrupulous over dancing, card-playing, theatre-going and the like⁽³¹⁾. There were however very few quarrels or dissensions, for though Brown sometimes contemplated becoming a full-time popular lecturer, or going to Oxford to open a Hall there, he was throughout loyally supported by diaconate and congregation in all he undertook.

Half the congregation, it was remarked, was middle-class, the other consisted of artizans and skilled labourers, who had come in mostly as a result of the popular lectures. This was indeed just the sort of mixed congregation Brown desired; he hated 'churches and chapels filled with the wealthier sort, and halls and theatres crowded with working people'⁽³²⁾. Worship was dignified and unemotional, the rite of baptism solemnly and reverently observed, and the musical standards exceptionally high. In politics Brown's people were solidly Liberal and radical. Here again they followed their pastor's lead, for the great democrat was always appearing on Liberal platforms, to advocate an extension of the franchise, female emancipation from the tyranny of both middle-class conventionalism and of male-dominated Trades Unions, more effective legislation against drink and prostitution - it was not his want to mince words over subjects like the Contagious Diseases Act - above all, municipal housing, free parks, baths and gymnasias, and the abolition of Sabbatarian restrictions⁽³³⁾. The politics of Brown's congregation were in fact like their philanthropy the natural expression of what Sir Edward Russell called the 'contagious masculinity' which their pastor instilled into his 'hard-headed and stout-souled' men whose 'absence of polish' was as conspicuous as his, and whose interpretation of the Faith corresponded so closely to his own version of what Christianity was really about.

Apart from the fact that Stowell Brown had baptised his great contemporary, W.P. Lockhart, there were few other resemblances between the two men. The story of the origin of Toxteth Tabernacle, founded in 1871, has been told in our second chapter where it properly belongs; but hitherto little has been said about Lockhart's own personality and beliefs, which highlight much of what is most grotesque and puzzling about those innumerable free-lance lay evangelists thrown up by the second Evangelical Awakening.

Firstly, it should be recalled that even after assuming the pastoral office at the Tabernacle in 1871, and to the time of his death in 1896, W.P. Lockhart remained a business man, justifying his combination of commercial and spiritual vocations on the rather doubtful analogy of St. Paul. The full-time career of an evangelist, he averred, would lead to self-indulgence and irresponsibility. Unfair critics of course declared that the lure of mammon was too much for him, but this was not really the case: he threw over the very profitable family business in Spanish wines in consequence of his temperance convictions, and eventually the time he spent on his evangelistic labours brought about the bankruptcy of his company and he was forced to return to the business world in a rather different capacity as director of a Building Society⁽³⁴⁾. He often felt, he declared, that his commercial contacts provided the best opportunities for personal evangelism.

Secondly, the precise nature of Lockhart's beliefs would call for comment, were they not exactly equivalent to those of his friend, C.H. Spurgeon. 'He held', wrote a fellow minister, 'the old Calvinist creed with this addition, that he believed in a free grace offered to all'. 'He believes', wrote the Liverpool journalist, Hugh Shimmin', with the highest of Calvinists in instantaneous justification and sanctification, with the most extreme of Arminians he teaches free salvation and growth in grace'⁽³⁵⁾. Cultured persons were generally agreed that he was little more than a 'fervent bigot'⁽³⁶⁾, though all had to admit that his services were usually most dignified and reverent⁽³⁷⁾. Others found in his preaching numerous traces of the Brethrenism with which he had been closely associated in his youth.

His denominational allegiance, as with many contemporary lay evangelists, sat lightly upon him. He rarely mentioned believer's baptism in his addresses, seems always to have been rather uncomfortable about the rite, and confessed that he 'shrank from the idea' of ministering to a Baptist Church. With any form of Baptist associational life, national or local, he would have very little to do. He was married (to a lady of aristocratic connections) in a Norfolk parish church. Had the Church of England in fact been more accommodating to men of his type, he would probably have found his spiritual home within her borders.

Perhaps however his was not really a serious loss to the Establishment,

for Lockhart's personality emerges from his extant writings as unctuous as his mental outlook was severely limited. He had little time for foreigners: an unpleasant note was sometimes struck in his addresses, as he referred to his own oratory as 'homely Saxon utterance', 'lusty Saxon'. Everything which pleased him be described as 'nice', and no doubt the two nauseating tracts which he composed for the last public execution in Liverpool, one for 'Before' and one for 'After' the event, struck his admirers as 'nice' also. 'Dancing, theatre-going, novel-reading, card-playing and drinking', he told a B.M.S. rally in 1886, 'are the five great evils sapping the life of the churches'. His narrowness and priggishness in the end became proverbial.

Yet his grimmer qualities were relieved, as Dr Watson's were not, by a conspicuous element of farce. Who could resist a wry smile as the preacher in his pulpit shattered his carafe whilst illustrating too violently with his hand the suddenness of the damned soul's descent to Hell, or as the Evangelical preacher walked around Sefton Park on his hands to rid himself of surplus energies? Then there remain for posterity the curious extracts from his love letters which his wife thought fit to print in her biography: 'what', he enquires, 'is unconverted love like? I suppose unconverted people do love, and very ardently too'. Stories about him were legion, and one set all Liverpool rocking. A drawing-room prayer meeting in his house was reported to have generated such a pitch of enthusiasm that its effects were felt by the menials in the kitchen below, and Lockhart had perforce to descend and calm them!

There is nothing particularly engaging however about his political and social views which are perhaps those naturally to be expected from a man of his spiritual make-up and social background. Lockhart, in distinction from his congregation which was predominantly Tory, was a Liberal, and in later years, like Spurgeon, a Liberal Unionist. Politics, of course, like temperance were strictly excluded from the pulpit, though he did consent to appear on political platforms in support of the three Evangelical M.P.s who had most generously befriended the Tabernacle, W.S. Caine, W. Crossfield and S. Smith. On social problems he had most decided views. He had, he said, no patience with "all this rubbish about land and wages". He regarded the Social Gospel in fact

as a greater threat to Christianity than Higher Criticism. At the time of the Downgrade Controversy of 1887 he had thought the fears of his friend, Spurgeon, exaggerated, but his own 'Downgrade' came four years later when, at the annual meeting of the Baptist Union, he rose to oppose Clifford's speech on the Christian concept of society in the following forthright terms: 'the Christian concept of society is that of a Company of regenerated men and women surrounded by a company of unregenerated men and women. The masses will never be saved by securing them eight hours' work or a full day's pay, but by bringing them to Christ' (38).

Narrow and inflexible Lockhart may have been, but there could be no doubt about the astonishing success of his church. The Tabernacle which had begun with 122 members had reached by 1886 a total of 800. Attendances were much larger: the religious census of 1881 showed the Tabernacle heading the Protestant list with 1200 in attendance at the morning, and 700 at the evening service. The following year the premises were doubled in size at a cost of £1300. Lockhart calculated that the total number of adherents attached to the church and its numerous mission stations could be little short of 7000. By the 1890s nevertheless the Tabernacle's prosperity was definitely on the wane. Lockhart's powers were beginning to fail, membership stood at only 600 on his death, and his successors, S. J. Jones (1895-8), H.O. Mackay (1899-1906) and W.G. Pope (1906-15) maintained this figure only by the most strenuous exertions. Spurgeonism was a definite phase of provincial Baptist development, which was probably even shorter-lived than the Hugh Stowell Brownism which it had so completely eclipsed.

(C) Suburban Expansion (1850-1900)

From the outstanding leaders of the great churches we turn to the more humdrum but in the end more enduring achievements of those lesser men who at this time planted and maintained Baptist witness in the suburbs of the expanding city. But the story of this growth is no record of a planned campaign of church extension: it was in fact, though comparable in magnitude to that of other denominations, so diverse in accomplishment that a chronological account is impossible. We must rather concentrate on the various types of evangelistic endeavour which were brought to bear upon the local situation, and these appear to fall into at least five classes: the 'colonizing' work of individual churches, in planting both suburban chapels and down-town missions, churches

reconstituted in buildings previously closed, causes arising independently of external agency, the somewhat belated strategy of the Liverpool Baptist Union, and finally, the consecrated labours of individual Baptists who with characteristic self-effacement sought neither public acclaim for the work they were doing nor even external assistance from those willing and able to furnish it.

Suburban Chapels and Working-Class Missions

Pembroke, not unsurprisingly, took the lead in church extension, and was responsible for the foundation of two new churches, Bootle and Richmond. An early evangelistic effort of Mr Joseph Baines of Myrtle Street in the village of Bootle had not produced a permanent church, but as late as 1823 there was still a Baptist Sunday School there, consisting of seventy 'rough children'. In 1839 however C.M. Birrell baptised in the sea, 'two bathing machines being used', eight persons who then formed the first Nonconformist congregation in Bootle⁽³⁹⁾. Within four years they were ready to build a chapel, and using the materials from the demolished Lime Street building, a church was quickly constructed in Derby Road, and opened for worship by Birrell and Lister in December 1844. Like nearly all Baptist causes it was however crippled by a huge burden of debt, and the original membership of 21, despite a succession of able pastors, increased only very slowly. A serious quarrel which arose over a raffle in 1873 led to a number hiving off to form the nucleus of Emanuel Congregational Church, and thereafter membership fell rapidly. By 1895 the congregation had decided to make a fresh start in a new area, and the Derby Road building was sold to the Roman Catholics and consecrated as St. Winifred's. A new Baptist chapel was opened in Stanley Road in 1896 at a cost of £3,500, of which all but £1500 had been raised by the opening day. Under the Rev. Edward Moore (1891-99) the cause in its new locality soon became much stronger than it had ever been in the past.

The rather halting development of the Bootle church stands in sharp contrast to the spectacular progress of Pembroke's other daughter church, Richmond, founded originally in 1859 as a mission in the Everton Athenaeum by two active deacons, A.S. Blease, and S.B. Jackson. The Rev. F.M. Robarts was appointed full-time missionary to the area in 1860, and was so successful that in 1864 Pembroke sanctioned the building

of a church opposite Richmond Hall in Breck Road. H.S. Brown and C.M. Birrell opened the large but architecturally undistinguished Richmond Church in 1865. Like Pembroke its deeds specified both open communion and open membership (the Bootle church had opted for the former, but not the latter). Almost immediately Mr Roberts, a refined and cultured man of Anglican antecedents, began to attract a large congregation of distinguished persons from all over the city, the families of Blease, Winchester, Pilcher, Simson, Sing, Henderson and Fernie providing a spectacle unique among the Baptist churches of Liverpool (though common in other denominations) - a string of carriages drawn up each Sabbath morning outside the church doors. Soon congregations of over 900 were regularly assembling, additional accommodation was provided, and a day school for infants commenced in 1870. By 1883 when Mr Roberts resigned, the church's membership stood at 500, and the congregation was as distinguished for its philanthropic concern as for its high social standing. Unfortunately however by this time the Cabbage Hall district of Everton was beginning to deteriorate seriously; and the number of wealthy families beginning to fall off: within the next three decades membership was decimated, and the number of Sunday School scholars reduced from 850 to 343⁽⁴⁰⁾. The Rev. J.H. Atkinson (1884-1909) accordingly adopted the recourse taken by so many contemporary Congregational ministers - to make his church institutional and reinvigorate his enfeebled flock by an infusion of working-class members. Not even these measures however halted the decline and by the early years of the twentieth century all kinds of novel experiments were being tried - free breakfasts, dinners and hot-pot suppers (of which Richmond provided more than any other church in the city) and a vigorous open-air evangelism. Within a single generation a social revolution had occurred in the area to which Richmond ministered, and the church had responded to it as vigorously as could reasonably be expected.

At its height Richmond was powerful enough to become a colonising church in its own right. The first of its two daughter churches, Tuebrook, founded by Mr M.M. Thompson, a member of Richmond church and a commission merchant in 1873, had a most unfortunate history, was rarely able to support itself without external assistance, was for a time in the 1890s handed over to the City Mission, and in 1911, its membership

reduced to a mere 33, became a special charge of the Liverpool Baptist Union which formed a Tuebrook Church Committee to supply it with lay preachers. Carisbrooke church was formed originally in 1873 by Mr Walter Bathgate, and after occupying various buildings in the Kirkdale and Walton area, finally acquired a permanent home in 1879. Mr Bathgate, an Anglican turned Baptist, threw up his teaching post at Liverpool College to minister to the congregation whose membership grew slowly to 168 by 1914. Bathgate, an austere and ascetic gentleman was an unusual type of Baptist minister, not least in his love of set prayers and the quiet formalism of his services. His ministry which lasted till 1922 was unspectacular and devoid of incident, but probably as suitable as any could have been for an infant church such as Carisbrooke.

Myrtle Street's colonizing energies were, as has been observed devoted rather to the outlying districts of S.W. Lancashire than to Liverpool itself, but in 1881 the church did establish the cause at Princes Gate, founded originally by a group of supporters living in the Princes Road area. The cost of this singularly beautiful church (said by some to be the finest in the denomination) was little short of £10,000, and was met by generous donations from former Myrtle Street members who had emigrated to America and prospered there. Twenty-six members of the chapel were dismissed to form the nucleus of the new strict communion and closed membership church, including Colonel C.A. Whitney, a prominent businessman, Liberal councillor, and president of the Liverpool Property Owners' Association. Under a succession of able and energetic pastors the church flourished, and by 1902 the debt on the building was finally extinguished. Particularly under the ministry of the Rev. T.E. Ruth (1905-1911) who introduced into Liverpool the now generally accepted Baptist practice of infant dedication, the church developed a remarkable spiritual and social life, attracting large numbers of young people. By 1914 its membership stood at 322.

Pembroke, Richmond and Myrtle Street were likewise the three churches most prominent in the establishment of mission halls, though in this activity they were joined by Toxteth Tabernacle. Even here there is a marked difference between Baptists and other deonominations for instead of each of these churches confining its energies to one or two missions, they spread them as widely as possible, perhaps dissipating them in the process. Their missions moreover were of a very diverse character.

The Tabernacle's were very closely controlled by the mother church, the others encouraged to be as autonomous as possible and to have membership rolls independent of the founding church. They were also very ephemeral: some lasted for only a few months, few survived into the 90s and even fewer into the twentieth century.

Pembroke supported only one mission, Walnut Street, founded in 1845 and till 1884 relying on a series of 'district missionaries' for this very poor area. The mission suffered severe losses in the present century, but somehow survived to 1921. Myrtle Street's missionary activity was in contrast so extensive that in 1884 its various missionary organizations were co-ordinated as a Home Missions Committee with the whole of Liverpool's slumland as its designated territory. There was, as we have seen from the example of the Mill Street Mission, plenty of work to engage the young men and women of Myrtle Street in the incredibly extensive range of activities which each branch station afforded. The first mission was Crown Street, commenced in 1845, transferred to Chatsworth Street in 1882 and closed in 1888; this was followed by the Mill and Jackson Street mission founded in 1849 and still flourishing in 1914. Solway Street was established in 1867 when a number of working class women complained to Stowell Brown that they could not find seats in his chapel, the mission in its early years being run largely by W.S. Caine. Juno Street (where the seating consisted of empty coal sacks) was taken in 1878, but in face of insuperable difficulties was abandoned in 1893, Barnet Street and Spekefields we have already noted in our sketch of their superintendent, Mr James Vaughan. Their story of heroic endeavour finally collapsing under a load of accumulated hardships is typical of most of Myrtle Street's evangelising enterprises.

Richmond chapel's missions, all confined to the Everton area, were even less stable and enduring. Clubmoor was commenced in 1862 but lasted only to 1885, Leadenhall Street, perhaps the most successful, was started in 1870, and despite the usual sharp decline in the 90s, was still extant in 1914, Priory Street, which like at least three others of the missions now under review, was originally worked by the United Methodist Free Churches, was taken in 1881 and closed in 1915, Rendall Street ran from 1880 to 1890, and Hartnup Street, a late venture, from 1910 to 1914.

Toxteth Tabernacle has always been prominent in the home missionary field. Beaufort Street, the Tabernacle's original home, was retained for missionary activity till 1896, Prince William Street, established by John

Thomas, a seventeen-year old youth, in 1867 lasted with extreme difficulty till 1891, Grenville Street ran only from 1877-78, Hampton Street from 1885 to 1896, Mill Street from 1879 to 1902, and Miller Street, taken in 1878, soon grew to be the Tabernacle's most flourishing station and survives to this day⁽⁴¹⁾.

The rise of this intrepid evangelistic activity certainly contradicts the oft-repeated suggestion that Victorian Nonconformity was unaware that a home-missionary problem existed - its all too rapid demise suggests that the churches' response was more and more inadequate as the century drew to its close.

Reconstituted Churches

Two down-town Baptist churches which in 1850 appeared to have closed their doors for the last time experienced in the latter half of the century a surprising outburst of renewed activity. Byrom Street was discovered to have been unaffected by the subterranean tunnelling of the railway company, and to avoid the building becoming a low music hall, it was purchased by Mr John Johnson, a wealthy limeburner and grandson of the former minister there, in June 1850. A variety of evangelists was employed to try to renew the church, which now stood in an area of extreme poverty, but all failed, until the advent in December 1851 of the Reverend Thomas Dawson of Bacup.

Dawson was to be responsible not merely for the revival of Byrom Street, but for the planting of at least four other Baptist causes in the city. He was a close communionist, though no hyper-Calvinist, and contributed greatly to the reemergence of close communion principles in the north-west in the 1860s and 70s which led to the formation of the North Western Association. He was moreover from 1852 to 1866 northern tutor of the Baptist Educational Society, known originally as the Strict Baptist Society whose object was the training of young ministers on close communion principles and which was the forerunner of the Bury Theological Institution (1866) and of Manchester Baptist College (1874). Throughout his residence in Liverpool, at least a dozen young men were thus trained in the Dawson household⁽⁴²⁾. Unexhausted by all his pastoral and academic work, Dawson was in addition between 1857 and 1889 chaplain of the Necropolis, the great Nonconformist burial ground⁽⁴³⁾. Unfortunately however this remarkable man possessed a most peculiar temperament, was always quarrelling

with others, and wandering from one place of worship to another. His ministry is thus yet another complicating factor in the tangled web of local Baptist history.

But of his success at Byrom Street there could be no doubt, and the work continued to prosper till in 1856 Mr Johnson died, and Byrom Street became the property of an individual even more extraordinary than Dawson himself. Mr Richard Haughton, Johnson's brother-in-law, was a lovable eccentric. A complete negation of the accepted portrait of the Victorian businessman, his only wish was to give away all he possessed of time, talents and resources. His office in Sweeting Street was a kind of paupers' relief agency, and his private philanthropy was proverbial. He was the rich Baptist of later Victorian Liverpool, occupying a position similar to that of Crosfield among the Congregationalists, lending or donating money to every new Baptist cause, and forgiving mortgages on churches all over the city. He preached both in Byrom Street and in the open air, and was happiest in the company of the down-and-out. He was however strongly inclined to Brethrenism, and one of his objects soon became to turn Byrom Street church into an evangelistic hall, run on Brethren lines. Mr Dawson, who resembled him in many ways, could hardly agree to this, and so resigned in 1861. Thereafter a variety of peripatetic evangelists including Richard Weaver and Gratton Guinness appeared at Byrom Hall, as it was now called, and gathered a congregation described by the Porcupine as "the most destitute we have ever seen assembled in a Protestant place of worship"⁽⁴⁴⁾. In the intervals Mr Haughton conducted worship himself, but his curious behaviour attracted only the scoffers. He endowed the church handsomely however, and in 1869 revived the Circus Street Schools for a day and evening classes among the children of the very poor. The Revs. A.E. Greening (1870-72) and Aaron Matthews (1875-77) continued the excellent work Dawson had begun, and the church reached the height of its prosperity under the Rev. J.E. Anderson (1880-1900), a rough, coarse man, ideally suited to the neighbourhood, who, by dint of vigorous open-air witness raised the membership to 310, many of them converted Catholics, and established branch missions in William Moulton and Westmorland Streets. Unfortunately after the death of Haughton in 1883, quarrels and dissensions arose among the various factions in the congregation, resulting in a serious schism in 1889 which produced the short-lived Mile End Baptist

Mission (later continued in Potter and Cockerill Streets, and finally closed in 1904). Anderson himself resigned in 1910, and later went to Canada where he joined the Anglican church. Byrom Hall never really recovered from these turbulent years. There were further schisms in the 1900s, and despite a temporary recovery under the Rev. Thomas Iles (1904-15), the building was finally handed over to the City Mission in 1918.

Soho Street, a church renewed in 1855, had a happier fate. For a time the building was worked by the Town Mission, but in 1859 a new strict Baptist church was founded, and in 1861, following his quarrel with Haughton, Dawson became the minister. Unfortunately wherever this gentleman went, quarrels and dissensions dogged his path, and within a year he had resigned. The church now became a branch mission of Myrtle Street chapel, but did not flourish, despite the hundreds of small terraced houses being erected in the area. Eventually however a suitable pastor was found in the person of the Rev. Eli Elijah Walter, appointed in 1872. With tremendous evangelistic enthusiasm, and taking full advantage of the prevailing excitement of the Moody revival, Walter had within four years raised the membership of his church from 34 to 334, an achievement as remarkable as Lockhart's, though it attracted far less notice.

Having altered the chapel deeds to allow for open communion in 1877, Walter next sought a new home for his congregation, as the Soho Street premises were now full to overflowing. It was not however until 1889 that Kensington church was built, at a cost of £5,000, in Jubilee Drive, and the old building disposed of to the Wesleyans. By 1895 there were 435 members, mainly tradespeople and artizans, and by 1903 the figure stood at 550, and an assistant minister was engaged. Then, in 1905, tragedy struck the cause, with the business failure of one of the deacons, Mr White, who had persuaded the minister and congregation to invest heavily in his carriage company. Though the church held together remarkably in the circumstances, Mr Walter felt it his duty to resign the same year, and the church entered a period of serious decline.

Churches and Missions Arising Independently

Among the many Baptist churches which arose in Liverpool after 1850, there are a handful whose beginnings do not fit into any of the prescribed categories. Two of these were commenced as properly

constituted chapels, the rest were one-time mission halls which later evolved into regular churches. All were singular in one respect or another, and none, initially at any rate, joined any wider association of churches or sought aid from the same. All were founded in impoverished areas, either in the town itself or in the declining villages on the outskirts.

Aintree chapel, Rice Lane, was founded in 1878 by a number of Baptists who had previously worshipped in Walton Congregational church. Its early history was marked by the usual financial difficulties and occasional schisms, and finally in 1900, when the membership was down to 39 (35 women and 4 men), the Liverpool Baptist Union stepped in, and persuaded the congregation to remove to a new church in Longmoor Lane. Even here the church failed to increase, till a lay pastor, Mr W.E. Longhurst (1908-12) managed to raise the membership from 33 to 75, and even persuaded the church to establish a branch mission of its own in Greenwich Street. Orrell Park chapel was founded by a number of baptised believers of various church connections in 1910. They built themselves a small £500 chapel and placed themselves under the direction of the Aintree cause, calling their first lay pastor, Mr J.N. Carr, in 1913. Hall Lane church was founded in 1876 by a Mr A. Fletcher, a factory inspector converted in the Moody revival of the previous year. Housed originally in a canvas tent, it acquired a cast iron building in 1880, and here a Baptist church was formed in 1884. The membership of this aggressively evangelistic church stood in 1888 at 60, but in 1891, they were given notice to quit by the owners of the land on which their church stood, and quietly disbanded the same year.

The Baptist Evangelistic Hall, Woolton, was founded in Allerton Road by a handful of supporters in 1885. The congregation was very enthusiastic, but mainly working-class in composition, and did not seek the help or fellowship of any other churches. Obscure and isolated, it could not hope to establish itself on a firm footing in this growing middle-class area where the Congregationalists and Wesleyans had been so successful. The church was disbanded in 1909. Ash Street, Bootle, arose out of the 1859 revival, in which year two small congregations were raised, worshipping in Waterworks Street and New Street, Linacre village. Both these held Baptist principles, and were run by two of Lockhart's young men, Mr R.J. Glasgow or Mr J. W. Schofield. They

united in 1887, when Ash Street chapel was built, Glasgow and Schofield continuing as honorary joint pastors for many years. In 1914 when there were 200 members and no less than 1145 scholars, a salaried minister, the Rev. A.T. Roberts, was appointed, Mr Schofield, by now a very old man, continuing as co-pastor.

Old Swan Baptist church has the distinction of being the only Liverpool cause regularly supplied with a succession of pastors by C.H. Spurgeon. It was founded in 1862 by some of Thomas Dawson's theological students, and with Spurgeon's assistance managed to support itself independently till in 1890 it became a branch mission of Kensington church, which status it still retained in 1914. It was situated in a very poor area, and like so many similar Baptist causes, made a particular point of carrying out missionary work among Roman Catholics.

Finally, Olivet Baptist Mission, Bootle, was commenced by a Mr Kirkham in the Elevator Hall in 1885, and removed to Spencer Street chapel, renamed Olivet, in 1894. Kirkham remained honorary pastor till 1913 when Mr R.A. Foster succeeded. A Baptist church of 40 members and 255 scholars was formed a year later. Like Ash Street church and most of these other missionary causes, Olivet was almost entirely working-class in composition.

Churches of the Liverpool Baptist Union

Though the Liverpool Baptist Union was founded in 1866, for many years it remained a factor of no significance in denominational life, partly because it had no executive powers, partly because it had no endowments or financial resources of any kind. Not till 1898 did the death of Mr W.J. Clowes of Myrtle Street chapel who bequeathed it a generous legacy of £5000 spur this moribund body into action. The money was used to purchase a site in Dovedale Road, Wavertree, where a handsome church in the shape of a Greek cross was built in 1904 at a cost of £8500. A church of 53 members was formed in this respectable residential district two years later, and under the inspiring leadership of the Rev. J.F. Shearer M.A., this figure had grown to 268 by 1914. The church, as was natural in such an area, practised both open communion and open membership. Woodlands Road, Aigburth, was the only other church which owed its origin to the local Union. It was built to serve the new Woodlands Road estate (a lower middle-class residential area) in 1906, seated 500 and cost £1880.

Progress however was very slow, the church was unable to support a full-time pastor, and membership stood at only 31 in 1914.

Churches Founded Through The Initiative of Individual Evangelists

The ill-success of the Liverpool Baptist Union was amply compensated for by the missionary labours of three remarkable individuals to whom no less than eight churches owed their origin. Two of them, Dawson and Haughton, have already been encountered in the turbulent story of Byrom Street, where it was clear that their evangelistic efforts were mainly directed towards a more humble social class than was catered for by other Free churches of the city. This deliberate policy determined their later careers as evangelists and church builders. Haughton remained a member of Byrom Hall from 1856 to his death in 1883, and the work here is the background to all his activities, wide-reaching as these were. In 1861 for example he built a shed at the bottom of his garden in Westminster Road for evangelistic services. The fact that the roof leaked and that Mr Haughton ended his preaching services on wet days soaked to the skin is quite characteristic. In these unpromising surroundings however he managed to gather a congregation for whom he built at his own expense Sharon Hall (Haughton preferred to avoid the term 'church', if possible) in 1876. Soon the Hall was crowded, mainly with Moody's converts, and the Rev. H. Cordon, a former missionary in China, was engaged as pastor. In 1878 Haughton enlarged the building at a cost of £2000, and by the time of his death in 1883 the membership stood at 162. Cordon now determined to move to a different area (Sharon Hall, a close communion church had entered into open competition with the nearby 'open' church at Richmond, and had proved far more successful among the working classes), and in 1892 built for his 235-strong congregation a small iron structure known as Stanley Park chapel on the site of the old Bronte cottage.

What happened next is astonishing, even in the annals of Baptist history. The membership of the church having risen by 1900 to no less than 322, Cordon decided to erect a splendid £8000 building adjacent to the iron chapel, even though this would involve an impossible debt. "Cordon's Folly" was duly erected, and his church duly collapsed. By 1907 the membership had shrunk to 30, and the congregation dispersed two years later. Fortunately, even in 1892 some 60 people had doubted the wisdom of Cordon's ambitions, and had stayed on at Sharon Hall

which it had been intended to close. Though shouldering a great financial burden, they reconstituted themselves as Kirkdale Tabernacle in 1893, and while experiencing many very difficult times, they underwent a rapid transformation under the outstanding pastorate of the Rev. C.W. Adams (1893-1922) who had quadrupled the membership by 1914, and embarked on vigorous missionary work among the poor people of the neighbourhood. One other cause owed its commencement to Mr Haughton, Olive Hall, West Derby, which he built in 1873 and ministered to himself. A church was formed in 1881, and Mr Henry Reid appointed pastor. On Haughton's death however, it became undenominational, and was later acquired by the City Mission.

Meanwhile the Rev. Thomas Dawson, following his ministries at Byrom Hall (1851-61) and Soho Street (1861-62) plunged once again into an heroic spell of missionary labours. First of all he formed a working-class church in Brunswick Road in 1863, which soon became too large for the rented premises where it assembled. Next he summoned a meeting of representatives of various Liverpool churches in 1866 (an ad hoc committee which was the nucleus of the Liverpool Baptist Union) whom he persuaded to assist him to build Fabius Church, Everton, on the site of the first Baptist meeting-house in Liverpool opened in 1707. Fabius was accordingly erected as a strict communion church in 1871, and especially under the long ministry of the Rev. C.R. Green (nephew of J.R. Green, the historian) which lasted from 1888 to 1922, grew to be a useful, if somewhat isolated, little congregation. But even before the official opening of Fabius, Dawson had quarrelled with almost everyone concerned in the project, and had taken himself and his followers to a succession of meeting halls in various parts of the city. Finally he built himself yet another church in Cottenham Street in 1878, which he helped to establish on a sound footing and then abandoned in 1885 after another quarrel. Yet another church was taken - Empire Street - purchased in 1890 from the U.M.F.C. Dawson however only ministered here for one year, for he died in 1891, and though his cause in Empire Street later agreed with Cottenham Street to support a joint pastor, the arrangement broke down, and the church in 1910 joined the Disciples of Christ.

The labours of Messrs Dawson and Haughton were confined to the poorer central and Everton areas of the city. In 1899 however similar

missionary work was commenced by Mr E.A. Carter in a comparable district of Waterloo. Mr Carter was trained at Spurgeon's College, and had been minister at Mitcham when in 1889 he removed to Waterloo, opened a printing establishment called Pioneer House, and established an organization, the Pioneers, to promote Baptist causes where there was a spiritual need, and to supply pulpit vacancies. This largely forgotten enterprise had a most remarkable history, especially when it was later combined with the Russian Evangelization Society. At the local level, Carter's household, with a group of young enthusiasts in training for missionary work, must somewhat have resembled Dawson's two decades earlier. Though their chief area of operations was to be, initially at least, in North Lancashire, the Wirral and the Isle of Man, the Pioneers did not neglect Waterloo itself. A church was formed which met in a variety of halls until an iron chapel was built in Oxford Road in 1898. The church which then had 26 members grew slowly under the ministry of the Rev. T. Adamson (1898-1909) till in 1907 it numbered nearly 100. In 1909 a new chapel was built in Crosby Road at a total cost of £6300, and the Rev. J.H. Atkinson of Richmond church became pastor a year later. By this time Waterloo had clearly emerged as one of the Pioneers' most successful ventures.

(D) The Social Gospel and the Conservative Defence
(1890-1914)

The pace of Baptist expansion, hurried, breathless almost, in the 70s and 80s, had by the closing decade of the nineteenth century slackened off considerably. The half-dozen churches of 1850 had more than doubled in number, the total membership was over 4100. But the pristine evangelistic zeal was dying, and the down-town missions beginning to fail. Social and political discontent was in the air, and the scene was set for a minor spiritual revolution within the local Baptist churches. If Harnack, Ritschl and the 'Kingdom of God on Earth' theology could find a handful of vigorous exponents within the city their message would certainly not fall on stony ground. Thus it came about that from 1890 onwards the waters of denominational life, never particularly calm, were stirred to the depths by the torrential rhetoric of the Social Gospellers.

Pembroke chapel was the first to experience the new evangel. The chapel had declined sharply since Birrell's death, and it was more as a

gesture of despair than of hope that an unknown young preacher by the name of Charles F. Aked was invited to the vacant pulpit early in 1890. Very soon however the impact of his remarkable personality was to be felt in the religious and political life of the city.

A tall, stalwart frame, a resonant and thrilling voice, and a pulpit technique which many considered hypnotic soon enabled Aked to turn Pembroke into the most 'progressive' church in the city, with an average evening audience of 1,900 and long queues outside the door several hours before each 'performance' began (the theatrical metaphors are appropriately applied to the new minister's histrionic techniques). Quite apart from natural gifts of a very high order, Aked magnetised the congregation by the sheer novelty of his message. A man of obscure social origins and a General Baptist, he had attended shortly before its closure the old Midland Baptist College, a centre of liberal theology and pronounced left-wing political leanings which had given to the Baptist communion ministers as distinguished in radical politics as John Clifford and Dawson Burns⁽⁴⁵⁾.

As a religious teacher Aked of course floundered in a hopeless theological murk; his Christology was as impossible as the rest of his beliefs were full of half-truths and glaring contradictions; he coquetted with Unitarianism most of the time, and then wondered why the less theologically advanced treated him as a heretic. By 1892 he had had enough of such wrangling. Quietly he abandoned polemical theology for the more profitable task of enthusing his hearers with a passion for the good life. Sermons on biblical subjects gave way to discourses on the latest book, play or political development. The Cross, as Evangelical critics were quick to note, was conveniently forgotten.

The vast congregation which responded to this preaching bore an unusual social character. The fact which impressed contemporaries was not that it was drawn from any particular social class, but that it was predominantly young. There were a few fairly wealthy supporters, the families of Treleaven (ink manufacturers), Sellers (small shipowners) and Campbell Collin (furniture manufacturers) being the most conspicuous. The student and apprentice class was particularly large.

To such enthusiastic bearers the Social Gospel was preached from Pembroke pulpit (or rather, platform, for like his mentor, John Clifford,

at Westbourne Park, Aked delighted to stride about during his hour-long harangues) with a vehemence never equalled in Liverpool before or since. The pastor made no secret of the fact that he was an eager Fabian - the Fabians of Liverpool, in sharp contrast to their brethren elsewhere, being both predominantly Christian and working-class, and enjoying the services of Aked as their chaplain - and an advocate of collectivism in both city and nation. He took a firm stand on the strikers' side during the coal and dock disputes of 1893-95, and his vigorous Socialistic advocacy at this time led eventually to the proposal that he should stand as independent Labour (not I.L.P.) candidate for Parliament, a move which somehow came to nothing⁽⁴⁶⁾.

It was however as a temperance advocate that he was best known and most notorious. An extremist here as elsewhere ('the fanatic', he had written, 'does not make mistakes - emotion clears the vision',⁽⁴⁷⁾) he stood foursquare on total abstinence for the individual, and total prohibition for the state. The more moderate temperance reformers of the Lundie school found his dogmatism unhelpful; others, particularly the Rev. T.W.M. Lund, of St. Mary's Church for the Blind, Liverpool's solitary Broadchurchman, and the leading antagonist of the temperance party, considered him an 'obnoxious nuisance',⁽⁴⁸⁾.

The Boer War naturally found Aked the leader of the Liverpool pro-Boers, and in the enflamed atmosphere of the period provided the energetic pacifist with an opportunity for a few scuffles, verbal and physical, with those who disagreed with him. The Boer War was punctuated by the death of Queen Victoria, and Aked quite characteristically used the Sabbath of Mourning to deliver a particularly vicious attack on the morals of the new sovereign. By this time his radical vagaries were of course proverbial. The year 1900 marked nevertheless the height of his ascendancy. After that date crippling arthritis and the total failure of his Passive Resistance League caused a diminution of his influence, and late in 1906, to the righteous anger of his fellow Socialists, he took a step which only those who knew him best realized was quite characteristic of the man, and accepted the pastorate of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, New York, the temple of the Rockerfellers and of America's leading oil magnates⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Naturally enough, on his departure his vast auditory (the term 'congregation' is inapt, for these people had assembled to hear an orator,

not to seek the fellowship of a Church) melted away altogether. With the Rev. Harry Youlden (1907-12), a hopeless schizophrenic who was eventually pronounced insane, and took away most of the now tiny congregation to form the Liverpool Ethical Church⁽⁵⁰⁾, the process of destruction which Aked had begun was most effectively continued. By 1914 Pembroke was doomed.

The work of Aked was paralleled at Kensington chapel by the Rev. Herbert Dunnice. Another product of the Midland College, Dunnice already displayed those rhetorical talents which were to carry him to cabinet rank in the first Labour government. During his ten years at Kensington (1906-15) his congregation swelled to enormous proportions, especially when he became president of the Liverpool Labour Party and turned his Sunday School into a political forum. By 1908 all his evangelical supporters had departed, and Dunnice could announce that the discipline of the sufferings they had imposed upon him had made him a better man! On his departure in 1915 the church had 516 members; two years later the figure stood at 180. Kensington thus became another church fatally weakened by the impact of the Social Gospel; after three decades of pitiful struggle for survival it finally closed in 1940.

Bootle was the other cause destined to be afflicted in this way. Once again from the Midland College there arrived here a young minister, Rowland David Lloyd, in 1899. Though more orthodox than his two contemporaries, he was sufficiently 'advanced' to provoke a most curious situation in 1905, when the pastor advised the cream of his congregation to withdraw, and found a new church of their own. Soon this new cause, known as Bankhall Mission, had far outgrown the church from which it had seceded, and Stanley Road, Bootle, was left to decline to its present enfeebled condition.

The Social Gospel had done its disastrous work, but in fairness to its exponents, it should be recorded that one of their number was actually responsible for the founding of a new cause in the city. William Rutledge, himself a Liverpool man, a Baptist student of independent means and singular tastes, deeply influenced by the teaching of Harnack, and the slightly later movement known as the New Theology, collected a small group of followers in the Hamlet parish of Aigburth about 1908, and in 1913 built for them the magnificent Hamlet Free Church. The fact that

this building contained both baptistry and font is eloquent of the confused nature of Rutledge's beliefs which somehow baffle analysis. It was indeed only due to the fact that the deeds of the church were deposited with Regent's Park College, Oxford, that Hamlet later on achieved recognition as a Baptist church at all. Hamlet, with its exaggerated emphasis on gymnastics and physical fitness was certainly an interesting experiment, but whether the original enterprise would lead was by no means clear, perhaps not even to the founder himself.

The extraordinary claims of the Social Gospel did not of course go unanswered, and the fact that the most effective reply came from within the denomination where most harm had been done was hardly a coincidence. John Thomas, poet, novelist, theologian and preacher, was called to the pastorate of Myrtle Street Chapel in 1893. His story was typical of many of his Welsh contemporaries. The son of a collier, he started work in a Glamorgan coal pit at the age of eleven, and began to preach when he was fourteen. He next proceeded to a Baptist Theological College, and then, after a brilliant academic career, graduated B.A. and M.A. of London University. Pastor at Salendine Nook, Huddersfield, from 1887 to 1892, he had already distinguished himself as a prolific pamphleteer and reviewer, and the excellence of his expository preaching was considered by many to point to his emerging as the logical successor to Alexander McLaren⁽⁵¹⁾.

It would have been a simple matter for Thomas, already renowned as a profoundly conservative thinker, to have cried heresy against the Social Gospel by whose advocates he found himself surrounded, and to have incurred from them the usual charges of backwardness and spiritual illiteracy. This he avoided, by presenting in his various works a reasoned, forthright, and perhaps understandably embittered, defence of the orthodox faith. The fact that he was listened to at all was due no doubt to the depth of his learning, his freedom from current prejudices, and his ability to see that much of what passed as orthodox Christianity was inessential and sometimes noxious. He thus ruthlessly brushed aside the unnecessary 'theological shibboleths' of the past, exposed the degrading sentimentality of popular Evangelical hymnody, and attacked the dyspeptic religion of gloomy Sabbatarians⁽⁵²⁾, at the same time as he acutely presaged that Orthodoxy would recover as soon as the current rationalism had destroyed itself by internal quarrels between its 'liberal' and 'mythical' schools⁽⁵³⁾.

Broadly speaking, Thomas' onslaught against the Social Gospel took three forms, biblical, theological and ecclesiological, on all of which grounds it was tried, and found grievously wanting.

In his attitude to biblical inspiration Thomas was uncompromisingly literalist. Time and again he turned to attack the Higher Critics, not merely for what they had done, but for their opening the floodgates to every 'newspaper scribbler' to follow in their wake⁽⁵⁴⁾. Accordingly his best known exercise in biblical scholarship was his stirring defence of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, a polemical work chiefly directed against Cheyne and Driver which did not really advance the argument further than the work of such contemporary conservative expositors such as Spurgeon and Parker.

As a theologian he was more impressive. The Social Gospel's fault he averred, was not that its exponents wilfully undermined the truth, but that, in response to tendencies in the secular world they had conveniently whittled away certain historic doctrines, while magnifying others out of all proportion. They had thus not so much destroyed orthodox beliefs as distorted it out of recognition. The righteousness and awful holiness of God had been sacrificed to 'a one-sided optimism which treats the love of God as a sentimental thing and obliterates the shadows of a moral government'⁽⁵⁵⁾. His transcendence had been eclipsed by a cloud of evolutionary immanentism⁽⁵⁶⁾, the false separation of the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith had led to a dangerous concentration on the incarnation at the expense of the Atonement - herein indeed Thomas saw the heart of the 'recent apostasy'⁽⁵⁷⁾. Finally, the Social Gospel's preoccupation with economic injustice had virtually banished the doctrines of sin and righteousness from the ordinary Christian's comprehension⁽⁵⁸⁾.

His teaching found its logical fulfilment in his doctrine of the church, and here he was perceptive enough to realise just where the fundamental error of the Social Gospel lay: its confusion between the nature of Christ's lordship over His Church and over the world. 'The supernatural and divine element in the Church is essentially distinct from the fact of God's presence in the world. High sounding phrases about

the divinity which is present in the general progress of humanity, if taken seriously, would destroy the very existence of the church' ⁽⁵⁹⁾. Thomas' concern therefore was to restore to the Church the consciousness of Her exclusive privilege, a sense of Her proper mission in society, and this proved to be the burden of his fascinating commentary on Revelation, *The Ideal City* (1897). The old Nonconformist insistence on the separation of church and state must be replaced by a vivid recognition of the Church's fundamental duty to claim secular life as its own province: 'the idea of the city is absorbed into the life of the Church. It is part of the destiny of the Church to save the city'. The Holy Church will thus be the nucleus of the holy nation, and the ideal society for which Christians must strive will not be a democracy, 'a half-way to the end, a transition period', but a theocracy, wherein 'all the vast secular organizations of society will find their ideal in being the bride of the Lamb'. These were prophetically brave words, and all the braver in that they were flung down as a challenge to the predominant intellectual fashion of the city ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

Much space has been devoted to Thomas, not merely because he is one of the most original thinkers who have ever appeared on the local Nonconformist scene, but because at so many points his thought resembles that of his great Congregationalist contemporary, P.T. Forster ⁽⁶¹⁾. An intensive study would no doubt reveal further similarities: both men for example presage a renewed Calvinism ⁽⁶¹⁾, while insisting on the cosmic scope of Christ's saving work, and Forster's unsatisfactory treatment of sacramental theology is paralleled by its complete absence in Thomas' writings, but the differences are equally striking: Thomas' narrow literalism, his curious devotion to Hegelian idealism to whose defence he devoted the last years of his life ⁽⁶²⁾, his angry rejection of Kenotic Christology. His theological principles, it is clear, owed little to the inspiration of others - its originality is perhaps its most remarkable quality.

Original or not, it was most decidedly unpopular and generally misunderstood in the Liverpool of the 1890s and 1900s. From the very start of his ministry, as soon as his position became clear, he was the constant target of cheap jibes and derision which may explain the subsequent outbursts of ill-temper to which we have already alluded. Only the Tory press had a good word for him, for Thomas had an

exaggerated admiration for the Empire, a passionate dislike of State Socialism and a most hearty contempt for the Boers⁽⁶³⁾.

Not surprisingly he failed to retain Stowell Brown's great congregation. Membership fell from 621 in 1893 to 406 in 1914, and attendances declined still further. Yet, unlike the Social Gospellers' vast audiences, his congregation remained devoted and loyal, and the fall in numbers was no more than could be expected, considering the hopelessly down-town situation of the church. Despite its 'chronically empty' seats in fact⁽⁶⁴⁾, the congregation was always experimenting with new forms of evangelistic endeavour, and as late as 1913 engaged a deaconess for social work in the immediate neighbourhood. Thomas had turned an amorphous body of 'hearers' into an earnest, dynamic and theologically educated congregation, and it was due in no small measure to his wise guidance that the chapel did not collapse in ignominy like Pembroke, but maintained a valuable witness in the centre of the city till its quiet and successful amalgamation with the Dovedale Road cause in 1939.

The confused, blurred impression of Baptist growth portrayed in the denominational histories is amply borne out by the evidence of a single, but by no means exceptional, locality. At the start as at the end of our period it is difficult to determine whether the Baptists are sectarians acting like denominationalists or denominationalists every so often reverting to the sectarian type. But the question 'Who were the Baptists?' often asked in regard to their seventeenth century origins is equally relevant to their nineteenth century heyday. In general the accepted sociological definition of a preponderantly lower middle class body, with a sprinkling of 'respectables' and a rich leaven of artizan adherents seems from the Liverpool evidence to be correct. After the mid-century decades and in sharp contrast to the Presbyterians and Congregationals they failed completely to establish themselves in the new middleclass suburban areas - they never for example entered Crosby or the far north, their appearance in Woolton was very short-lived and their penetration into Aigburth belated and fortuitous. The regions where they were most successful correspond closely to those where Primitive and Free Methodism likewise flourished, the borderlands and

twilight zones of Kirkdale, Aintree, Tuebrook and Walton, and the less fashionable districts of Everton. The social appeal and the corresponding evangelistic ardour of these denominations appear to have been very similar.

Politically too the Baptists were undistinguished, despite the sound and fury of the Social Gospel. They produced one Liberal M.P., W.S. Caine, and one local notability, Captain Denton, who led the Liverpool Liberals for a few years at the turn of the century. Otherwise few active political figures are to be found in their ranks, and here the contrast with Manchester where they were often the ruling clique is very marked. Yet in one sphere, that of public philanthropy, where they might have been expected to display a singular lack of enterprise, they were well to the fore. The enthusiasm which inspired Cropper's social experiments and the Circus Street Schools in the early part of the century was paralleled later on by the work of Vale House (1874-1911), a girls' orphanage supported entirely by Richmond Chapel, the Ragged School movement wherein Baptists seem to have played a more prominent role than any others, and above all in the remarkable experiment launched by Mr Haughton in 1873 and known subsequently as Mrs Birt's Sheltering Home, a scheme to rescue and train orphan paupers and resettle them in Canada. Despite very limited resources no less than 7,000 children had passed through the hands of the egregious Mrs Birt by 1914 ⁽⁶⁵⁾. The breadth of meaning which these Baptists read into the dominical command to seek and save the lost is not the least intriguing feature of their nineteenth century witness.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WESLEYANS

RELUCTANT DISSENTERS

'Wild asses' colts' was John Wesley's one-time description of the Liverpool Methodists⁽¹⁾ but, appalled as he was by their rebellious individualism, he never ceased to admire their evangelistic zeal. Each of these elements was conspicuous in the founding of the second Liverpool Chapel, that at Mount Pleasant, in 1790, the year before Wesley's death. Erected in a prosperous and expanding district, the new chapel had eleven trustees⁽²⁾ whose occupations, one gentleman, one brewer, two shipwrights, a paper merchant, a joiner and an architect, reveal that while the Wesleyan body was still predominantly artizan, the middle class element was increasingly assertive. From later evidence too it is possible to infer that from the very first the Mount Pleasant supporters were accustomed to worship during and not before or after church hours, and also that the erection of this second chapel was the first step in breaking what unity and cohesion the denomination had ever possessed. As in the case of the Pitt Street deed, so in that of the new chapel, the Liverpool Methodists' confidence in their own legal acumen was a source of grief to their leader. They are a bold people indeed, intimated the dying Wesley, to have put down already £1100 on their new chapel, but 'the deed is clumsy enough; I am surprised no Methodist will take my advice. I have more experience than any attorney in the lawoh, why will you alter the beautiful deed we have already?'⁽³⁾.

John Wesley's death and the uncertain position of the Methodist societies vis à vis the Established Church threw Liverpool Wesleyanism into a confusion worse confounded than almost anywhere else. Thomas Taylor, stationed at Liverpool in 1791, found the societies split two to one in favour of a separated position, though among the leaders, ten stood out for the Church, with only thirteen against⁽⁴⁾. What was even worse, with an impending sense of the dissolution of their body, some Wesleyans had actually closed the chapel house, and Taylor wisely decided to leave his family behind in Manchester until the situation was clarified. After some hesitation the new minister came down heavily on the side of the separatist party who were particularly strong at Mount Pleasant, conducted for them services in church hours, and even went so far as to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Immediately the 'Church' party in high dudgeon withdrew, and a pamphlet war ensued. Taylor was arraigned before the

Methodist Conference of 1792 to answer for his irregularities, while the people, as if to emphasise their approval of his actions, chose two 'elders' to administer holy communion to them during his absence⁽⁵⁾.

Wisely Conference shelved the whole matter, dropping communion services for a time, but permitting them to be introduced unostentatiously when passions had subsided, and, in an effort to conciliate both parties, appointing Joseph Bradford, a strong 'Churchman' as Taylor's colleague.

His successor, John Pawson, had nevertheless great difficulty in 'holding the people together' against what he called 'the crabbed leaders of the High Church party' who by September 1794 had formally left the Wesleyan body. Like Taylor, Pawson obviously followed the will of the majority of the people, and declared that he would 'willingly die a martyr for the sacrament', though even he was embarrassed in the autumn of 1793 by the sudden appearance in the town of the freelance Dr Coke who conducted an ordination service, the first in Methodism after the death of Wesley⁽⁶⁾.

The outstanding feature of Liverpool Wesleyanism at this, as at later periods, was that the acutest internal controversy did not dampen the evangelistic ardour of a body whose continued existence depended on its fearless proclamation of the gospel to the neglected masses. These years, which saw Wesleyanism painfully groping its way from society status to full church consciousness, were precisely those when the young local preacher, Evan Roberts, the founder of Welsh Wesleyanism, was preaching in Welsh and English in the depressed parts of Liverpool and the surrounding villages⁽⁷⁾, or when Adam Clarke, Pawson's junior colleague, was doubling the society's membership by similarly planting new causes at Speke, Walton and Aintree, as well as within the town itself⁽⁸⁾. So serious did this missionary endeavour appear in fact to the Mayor of Liverpool that in 1792 he informed the Home Secretary that in and around the town there were now so many Methodist meeting houses, and the people were so disposed to attend them because there were no others, that 'the youth of the country are trained up under a set of men not only ignorant, but whom I think we have of late had too much reason to suspect are inimical to our happy constitution'⁽⁹⁾

Societies were multiplying fast, but chapels were not, though the work within Liverpool itself had become so extensive by 1793 that in that year Mr Isaac Wolfe, a leader, rented a chapel in Edmund Street from a Mr Wells, another irregular arrangement, fraught with future dangers.

By the year 1794, with this upsurge of evangelistic activity, the restored harmony between preachers and people and the disgruntled High Churchmen now meeting by themselves, the affairs of the Wesleyan body locally seemed to be more harmonious than at any time since Wesley's death, and a printed address was despatched in December of that year to Manchester and Stockport where the sacramental dispute was still continuing. This document⁽¹⁰⁾ signed by nearly all the leaders and trustees of the town, rejoiced in the permission Conference had given to celebrate the Lord's Supper whereby 'many have been brought into glorious liberty while only a few of; our brethren in some small way withdrew themselves from us'. A year later the Plan of Pacification set a legal stamp on the settlement of Liverpool's (and Methodism's) grievances, and Mount Pleasant and Pitt Street were both recognised as chapels where Holy Communion could be celebrated⁽¹¹⁾.

Inevitably however such a confused and protracted dispute could not end to the complete satisfaction of all parties, and quite apart from the High Churchmen, there was bound to be a knot of persons (whom in this instance even an admirer described as of 'turbulent and violent character'⁽¹²⁾) determined to disrupt any plan of pacification whatsoever.

Of all the lay rebellions within Liverpool Methodism none was so pointless or unreasonable as that of the Kilhamites. A printed address to the Methodist Connexion which they composed in March 1797⁽¹³⁾ both reveals the feebleness of their case and provides an interesting account of their disruptionist intrigues. In 1793, we learn, a few leaders 'from the best of motives' had begged for Sacrament and Services in Church hours, a plea subsequently granted. This however merely gave the preachers the opportunity to become 'priests', and soon the layfolk realised that they had been 'forging chains for themselves'. Alexander Kilham, the leader of the malcontents in other parts of the country, had then sent a bundle of his pamphlets to the Liverpool trustees and leaders, which documents had been illegally seized by Mr Moore the minister and buried in his garden, but had secretly been dug up and read⁽¹⁴⁾.

A large number of trustees, now happy in the knowledge that lay rebellion was widespread throughout the Connexion, (it mattered little if this was for reasons entirely the opposite of their own) had then requested Mr Moore to allow Kilham to state his case in Liverpool, but Moore had refused. Kilham had however appeared in the town, preached in the Independent chapel, and in the room where the High Church party still met (an odd example indeed of extremes meeting), and had finally made his way to the illegally constituted Edmund Street chapel whose tenant, Mr Wolfe, was one of his sympathizers. Here an exciting scene ensued. The Chapel was alternately stormed and barricaded by both parties, until the constable was called in, after which Kilham made his way to Mount Pleasant where he was nailed into the pulpit to prevent forcible ejection. Once again however Mr Moore and a strong party appeared crying 'pull him down', but Kilham at the pulpit end was so strongly defended that after breaking the windows the preachers' party was compelled to retreat. Moore then summoned a leaders' meeting (about which nothing is mercifully known), and announced that peace had been restored. - On Kilham's supporters denying that this was the tenor of the meeting, Moore expelled them all, after which they immediately formed five classes of the 'New Itinerancy', and begged their leader to supply them one or perhaps two preachers.

Moore, 'whose rage', Mr Wolfe declared', was terrible'⁽¹⁵⁾ had done well to purge the Wesleyan body of so unpleasant an element, and even better to have ensured that in the actual year of secession the circuit membership showed an impressive increase of 327 (from 1123 to 1450). The New Connexion on the contrary was very soon in dire distress, full of 'persecutions', 'recriminations' and 'a tyranny worse than that of the old body'⁽¹⁶⁾. Even the two most prominent lay leaders, Mr Wolfe, the brewer, and Lionel Special, the builder, had left within a few months; and were quietly received back into the Wesleyan fold. The first phase of lay rebellion had been no more than a damp squib, and the denomination was at peace again.

(2) The Holy Community And Its Enemies (1798-1834)

The social significance of Wesleyanism has been variously judged by the historians: the movement saved England from revolutionary excesses; it acclimatized the working class to the harsh discipline of industrialism;

it was the nursery of political democracy. As far as Liverpool is concerned the surviving evidence would indicate that the first and second of these contentions are unsupported, and the third seriously mistaken.

Bishop Wickham's conclusions as to Sheffield Methodism at this period is far more relevant to the Liverpool situation: 'it defies sociological label, being purely a religious revival movement and not the stereotyped expression of a social group',⁽¹⁷⁾. Here indeed appears to lie the major distinction between Liverpool Wesleyanism and the older Dissent: Methodism's appeal to a broad cross-section of the community from the very wealthy to the very poor. The occupations of the local preachers as shown on successive circuit plans are in this context most illuminating (it is far wiser to consider the preachers as a microcosm of the whole Methodist people rather than the trustees who tend to be picked from the more wealthy and powerful families). A few men of substance appear among them, but most are definitely of the lower middle/artizan class - clerks, teachers, craftsmen, shopkeepers - with a smattering of labourers.

A second, and more surprising, feature of the Wesleyans is their unbusinesslike character which may possibly arise from their lack of experience in the world of commerce and high finance. Surviving trustees and leaders minute books show money being handled with extreme carelessness, projects embarked upon without consideration of cost, and debts accumulated which would have appalled other Nonconformists. Little wonder that the bankruptcy rate among Wesleyan laymen was by the mid-century so high.

Thirdly the impression arises that Liverpool Methodism was for its adherents a whole way of living rather than a spiritual afterthought to secular life which is unhappily the case among many other Dissenters who in Liverpool tended to attach themselves as 'bearers' to the popular preachers of the day, and whose denominational allegiance sat lightly upon them. Biographical materials of the eminent lay leaders, as will become clear, point to the fact that Wesleyanism demanded from its adherents the whole of their 'talents, gifts and graces' and shaped their outlooks accordingly: extra-connexional cares tended only to embarrass. Thus from the great families down to the least, their lives were spent and often exhausted in an endless round of church activities of a missionary,

administrative, educational or eleemosynary kind. They were the Lord's People, a holy community, saved from an introverted exclusiveness only by their overpowering joy in living and that 'optimism of Grace' which allied to their Arminian beliefs, forced them out of their societary concerns to seek and save the lost in the dark places of the town.

Finally they were a simple, uncomplicated folk whose achievements it is as easy to caricature as their servility before their authoritarian preachers is easy to decry. Their minute books are filled not with the calculated business decisions or the uncompromising disciplinary judgments of the older Dissent, but with whimsical references such as the following, taken from the local preachers book of the North circuit: Brother X apologizes for having carelessly made his way to preach at West Kirby, Cheshire, when he should have gone to Kirkby, Lancs; Brother Y, having sought and gained the affections of a pious young female to whom he promised marriage and subsequently and dishonourably broke off the engagement without any reason on her part - his name to be removed from the Plan for six months, and then, on evidence of penitence to be restored 'on trial'; Brother Z, a pastrycook, who has been baking dinners on the Lord's day is gently admonished with prayers that his temporal circumstances may improve, and make such action unnecessary⁽¹⁸⁾.

Some or all of these qualities which had become innate in Wesleyanism by the 1830s and 40s are revealed in the lives of those few who rose to prominence in Liverpool society. Thomas Sands, general merchant, elected a Tory councillor in 1837 and the first Wesleyan mayor in 1843, was a dull, uninspired character, who took no independent action without first consulting with Dr Bunting, his spiritual advisor, who always invoked Providence when political arguments failed him, who never indeed made a successful political speech until in 1841 he controverted the arguments of the Anti-Corn Law League which had (significantly enough) been making a special appeal to the Liverpool Wesleyans with a tract full of quotations from John Wesley, and who in the year of his mayoralty embarrassed his party by nearly securing his own disqualification for having omitted to pay his town dues⁽¹⁹⁾.

Joseph Leather, Sands' younger contemporary and a cotton broker, like most Wesleyans eschewed a political career and likewise the allurements of the Established Church, preferring according to Orchard⁽²⁰⁾

'to sit at the feet of some spiritual Gamaliel'. Good natured, sound principled and highly esteemed, Leather was believed to be a most generous philanthropist, but he preferred to retain an obscure anonymity when he could easily have taken his place among the mercantile celebrities of the town.

John Farnworth, Tory councillor, the second Methodist mayor (1865), and by that time 'the leading man among the Wesleyans' was like Sands the despair both of his political critics and of the party he served. Though once again extremely generous in his giving to his own denomination, Farnworth in his public addresses rarely rose above the simple ethics of Wesley's sermons which had been his sole training in political and business morality, while his mayoralty consisted of an endless round of visits to the religious and philanthropic institutions of the town, to the complete neglect of his political obligations. To the Porcupine this meant 'a patronizing, well-meant, silly assumption of guardianship over the working classes'; to more understanding critics it betokened a real, if over-paternalistic, concern⁽²¹⁾.

Thanks to men such as these Wesleyanism by the mid-nineteenth century had acquired a well-defined public image on which contemporaries often remarked, and which Orchard shrewdly summed up in the following words: "In Liverpool the Methodists form a numerous body with a fair proportion of intelligent, well-to-do brokers, merchants e.t.c., but they do not furnish their due proportion of public men. They are never heard of beyond their shops, offices and chapelsAmong the large and influential band of noble-hearted Christian philanthropists who are the salt of our city, scarcely one Methodist is found: they are beaten hollow by the Presbyterians and even by the Baptists. Perhaps they say, 'I dwell among my own people'. Exactly, but they dwell there too exclusively"⁽²²⁾. The secular world clearly found the inner life of the Holy Community almost beyond its comprehension.

But this community, described by a recent historian as 'a whole network of intimate social relationships an enclave, godly, compact and austere ... not merely a church within a church, almost a nation within a nation'⁽²³⁾ was as far from being an exclusive in-group as it was possible to be. The very increase in its numbers underlines its intense missionary urge, for whereas in 1800 there were but 1490 Methodists in Liverpool, in

1834 there were 3608, and the latter figure would have been even larger had not a separate Prescot circuit been formed in 1811. The increase was by no means steady or uniform, and was halted and even reversed in the periods of economic distress from 1806-8, 1811-13 and 1821-6, but a growth of 250% in membership remains impressive.

Inevitably new chapels were required for this influx of zealous converts, and the first of these was Leeds Street erected in 1800 in a poor part of the town at the terminus of the Leeds-Liverpool canal. Leeds Street, whose first minister was Dr Adam Clarke and which soon had a membership of 700 was a working and artizan class chapel from the very start, for though the pew rent system operated in the gallery, the benches in the body of the chapel were entirely free⁽²⁴⁾. A church of a very different kind was Brunswick, a huge building in the Ionic style erected in 1811 at the enormous cost of £8000. Brunswick was constructed in Moss Street, then a lane passing through corn fields, in correct anticipation of future development at the north end of the town. Equipped with an organ, paid singers, a 'clerk' to read the versicles and, of course, the Anglican liturgy, Brunswick, or the 'amphitheatre chapel' as it was called, soon became as well known denominationally as its namesake in Leeds. Its congregation was uniformly prosperous, and by 1828 when a membership of 549 was reported and every seat was let on the pew rent system, even Jabez Bunting was a little afraid to minister 'to a people so respectable and intelligent'⁽²⁵⁾.

By 1826 the Liverpool circuit had grown so large numerically and geographically that Conference decided on a division into Liverpool North and Liverpool South, the former containing Leeds Street and Brunswick chapels, the latter Pitt Street and Mount Pleasant. Necessary perhaps in the circumstances, this division was fraught with future dangers, for while the South circuit was socially homogenous, it was almost inevitable that rivalry should one day develop between middle-class Brunswick and proletarian Leeds Street.

Only one large new chapel was erected between the division of the circuit in 1826 and the schism of 1834, Wesley, Stanhope Street, built by Liverpool South circuit in 1827. Rather like Brunswick in its churchly tastes, Stanhope Street impressed a contemporary by 'a powerful organ giving solemnity to its services', and 'a semi-religious

light falling through an oval window of stained glass' which 'imparts a sacred shade to the communion table' (26). Though quickly filled to capacity, Wesley chapel never attained the respectability of Brunswick: Ned Sunners, the cabman's bishop and converted pugilist, was first introduced to the church by a group of working-class friends who were members there, though possibly some of them like Sunners himself who now abandoned the foundry for the Customs House discovered that their social status improved rapidly with their new religious contacts.

The building of these large chapels however gives no idea of the real nature of Wesleyan expansion at this period which was based firmly on the founding of preaching places, mission stations and class meetings in all kinds of places untouched by other deonominations. Thus the circuit plan of 1808 lists besides the established chapels and various outposts on the Wirral, Gerard Street, Prescott, St. Helens, the Herculaneum Pottery, Knowsley, Garston, Dungeon (Speke), Bold, Havannah, Blackbrook, Aintree, Maghull and Ormskirk. That of 1825 adds Nut Grove, Ashton's Green, Haydock, Millbrook, Aigburth, Southport, Tarbuck, Halewood, Jordan Street, Broad Green and Richmond Fair, while five years later the North circuit plan includes Bond Street, Kirkdale, Gill Street, Hodson Street, Edgar Street, Eccles Street and Princes Dock. What this implied in terms of travel, hardship and devoted service it is difficult to imagine, especially when it is learned that alongside this kind of evangelism the Methodist people provided a tract distribution service involving visits to about 3,300 families weekly (27). Only occasionally however did a preaching station give rise to a permanent chapel building. The Pottery Chapel was built for the Wesleyan preachers by the proprietors at an unknown date, Crown Street Chapel to serve the village of Windsor in 1831, and Woolton in 1834; others too may have enjoyed a brief and shadowy existence.

This kind of ebullient Methodism naturally attracted the services of the leading itinerant preachers in the denomination. Adam Clarke was here from 1793-5 and from 1801-3, and on the second of these occasions had the distinction of founding the Liverpool Philological Society. After 1815 moreover he lived in retirement at Millbrook which was in the Liverpool circuit, though Clarke always appears as a supernu^{er}mary on the Manchester plan (28). The dreaded Jabez Bunting was circuit minister

from 1809-11 and from 1830-33, quieting all criticism and spending in Liverpool 'some of the happiest years of his early ministry' ⁽²⁹⁾.

Dr Robert Newton, sometime secretary of Conference, likewise served for two terms in Liverpool (1817-20, 1829-32), and in 1819 is found preaching vigorously against the Luddites, and praying that Liverpool might be spared a Peterloo ⁽³⁰⁾. The achievements of these great men pale however before those of the forgotten Thomas Cooper who staged a great revival particularly among the 'respectable classes' in 1803 ⁽³¹⁾, or James Wood, remembered by Picton as the 'Macaulay of Methodism', who evangelized among the lowest classes, gaining over 1000 converts in the great period of revival from 1800-6, and another 550 in a similar movement in 1821 ⁽³²⁾

Liverpool also had the honour of entertaining the Methodist Conference on several occasions, and nearly every Liverpool Conference seemed to result in some major policy decision; that of 1807 planned the first Home for 'worn-out' Preachers, that of 1813 sent out the first missionaries to Ceylon, setting apart seven men for service in 'Asia', that of 1820 produced the famous 'Liverpool Minutes' which remained for a century the spiritual guide book for Pastoral Synods and ministers' meetings within Wesleyanism, while that of 1832, meeting at the height of the cholera epidemic, petitioned Parliament in favour of the abolition of slavery.

Wesleyanism, national and local, was in fact a caring as well as an evangelising agency, and in Liverpool this emerges clearly in the pleasing efforts which the denomination made to erect schools to nurture children in the faith of the holy community and establish charitable institutions to give effect to its social concern. The Wesleyans' school building achievement was indeed remarkable, and from the time Pitt Street opened its Sunday School in 1785, continuous. The Manchester Statistical Society, reporting in 1834, revealed that by that date the Liverpool Wesleyans had 21 Sunday Schools with 3825 on their books and 2896 in regular attendance, figures which exceeded those of all the other Nonconformist bodies put together ⁽³³⁾. In a non-manufacturing town such as Liverpool however the importance of the Sunday School in imparting basic education was far less than in Manchester where day schools were few and poorly attended, and it was thus to their day schools that the Liverpool Wesleyans devoted most of their energies. Not merely had they by 1824 three powerful school establishments, Brunswick (established

1812 with 275 pupils), Leeds Street (1820:400 pupils), and Jordan Street, (1820:550 pupils), they had also the distinction of having built the first infants school in the town, that at Jordan Street which received children of 2 upwards, and the first Deaf and Dumb School (1823) which catered for all the 230 deaf mutes in Liverpool⁽³⁴⁾.

This was but one aspect of the philanthropy of a denomination whose concern for physical well-being has been consistently ignored by unsympathetic historians. Not merely had the Liverpool Wesleyans their Tontine and Clothing societies for their own poor; in the Strangers Friend Society established in 1789 they sought to dispense to new arrivals of all creeds and races a type of relief which the Vestry system by its very nature could not provide⁽³⁵⁾. It is significant indeed that when a local Methodist sought to defend his body against the attacks of theological hair-splitters such as Sandemannians and Unitarians he should cite in Methodism's defence not its evangelistic work but that 'catholic Christianity' which was at its heart, and which was now despatching the beneficent agents of the Strangers Friend Society into Liverpool's 'caverns of distress' to rescue 'famished wretches' from disease and starvation⁽³⁶⁾. Some at least of John Wesley's Methodists clung tenaciously to their founder's ideals.

A rare and dull work, Miss Kezzie Crawford's 'Autobiography of A Methodist Preacher's Daughter'⁽³⁷⁾ traces the fortunes of an unremarkable young woman in 'Birdpool' (easily identifiable as Liverpool) in the 1830s. It consists merely of an endless round of rallies, tea meetings, sewing parties etc. but what is most striking is its total lack of reference to the devastating crisis within Liverpool Methodism in these years. Herein perhaps lies an important lesson for the historian: the story of Wesleyanism in the sixty years after its founder's death has usually been written in terms of schism and disorder: perhaps to the average church member these were but trying interruptions in the principal concerns of his religious pilgrimage.

After the crisis of 1797 there is no further hint of discontent till 1811. In that year application was made to the Liverpool Quarterly Meeting for the installation of organs in both Pitt Street and the new

Brunswick chapels. The meeting having rejected the plea by 33 votes to 30, Conference nevertheless granted permission for them to be installed. The Rev. Joseph Entwistle, the minister concerned, trembled lest a major secession take place, but only a few persons left, and by August 1811 "all is peaceful in Liverpool. Opposition to the organ has ceased"⁽³⁸⁾. A few rumblings of discontent were also heard at Mount Pleasant in the years 1815-20. Here there was some bickering between overmighty trustees and the ministers, but no secession resulted⁽³⁹⁾.

More serious trouble occurred however in 1825. In that year the Rev. Thomas Wood expelled Mr Peter M'Clintock, an aged leader, on a matter of discipline, and a little later Mr David Rowland on various charges, including one of immorality. A memorial of protest containing 87 signatures was at once sent to Conference which hastily sent a deputation containing both Newton and Bunting to the town⁽⁴⁰⁾. Wood's decision was reversed, but it was this deputation which recommended the division of the town into two separate circuits and the splitting of the single Leaders Meeting into four sections. The former decision may have had to do with the problem of the circuit's being too large; the latter was clearly intended to isolate pockets of discontent so that they could be more easily discovered and suppressed⁽⁴¹⁾.

In any case the circuit division gave rise to great difficulties. The South circuit, standing on its dignity, requested to be placed first in official lists, and referred to the North as the 'junior' circuit in Liverpool. Even more serious was the failure to settle financial arrangements⁽⁴²⁾, especially the Stanhope Street debt. From this point onwards the growing burden of chapel debts is never absent from the minds of the Liverpool Wesleyans, and there were all too few ministers like the Rev. John Scott (Brunswick, 1827-30) who tackled the problem with vigour and reduced the debt in his church from £12,500 to £8,000 in a comparatively short time⁽⁴³⁾. In other chapels chronic indebtedness was now accepted as a normal feature of Wesleyanism, and treated by the laity with an equanimity which would have appalled other Dissenting bodies.

In this disturbed atmosphere the Leeds Organ Case (1827) which gave rise to a minor schism and the birth of a shortlived denomination of Protestant Methodists, had repercussions in Liverpool. The Rev. John Scott tried at first to prevent the matter being discussed by the leaders

Meetings in the town, but strong opposition was voiced by Mr Rowland, and after protracted manoeuvrings the North circuit memorialised the 1829 Sheffield Conference against the previous year's decision on the Leeds case. Fortunately for the ministerial party the South circuit whose superintendant at this time was the Rev Robert Newton, secretary of Conference, dissented completely from the North's views and presented one of the two loyal memorials sent to Conference, congratulating them on the Leeds decision. A short pamphlet war broke out between Scott of the North circuit and Webster Morgan, a Methodist bookseller of Edgehill, but by 1829 the incident had apparently closed⁽⁴⁴⁾.

A year later however a more ominous cloud appeared on the horizon. In a letter to the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine the Rev. John Scott while reporting glowingly on the peace of Liverpool Wesleyanism and the efforts being made to carry the gospel into the courts and alleys of the town, referred grimly to a certain 'anonymous monthly publication' which 'represents the whole body of Methodist preachers as men of sinister mind', the work apparently 'of some disappointed and vindictive man'.

The identity of the editor of this publication which called itself the Circular and ran from 1830 to 1833 when it was merged with the Christian Advocate⁽⁴⁵⁾ was despite the frantic efforts of Scott and others never discovered. Its skilfully polemical style would indicate that a man of some intelligence had a hand in its production, and probably either James Picton (of library fame) or William Byrom, a teacher, must take responsibility.

The Circular began with purely historical arguments. The recent Conferences, it was declared, had destroyed the Methodist constitution, and 'whittled away' the powers of the trustees', 'the guardians of Wesleyan liberties'. These principles were enshrined in the Articles of 1795 and 97 to which the Circular always appealed 'in the spirit and the letter', and insisted on interpreting as a contractual business arrangement rather than the flexible guidelines which they were originally supposed to be. But these 'traditionalists' (who seemed to know more of Locke than of Wesley) were in fact revolutionaries in disguise, and showed their true colours at the time of the Reform Bill crisis when they demanded that the 'spirit of reform' should penetrate even Conference, and that lay representation and the ballot be introduced forthwith⁽⁴⁶⁾.

From historical it was a short step to contemporary grievances, and

here the agitators sheltered behind the aged and respected figure of Mr John Russell, a basket-maker, the rebellious 'old John', about whose activities the Rev. John Beecham, his minister, had frequently warned the alarmed Dr Bunting⁽⁴⁷⁾. Russell however unlike the younger malcontents was an upright man, genuinely convinced that Bunting was perverting the Methodism he had known in his youth into a horrid caricature⁽⁴⁸⁾.

It is also clear from the Circular that the rebels were increasingly suspicious of the undue powers wielded by some of the wealthier Liverpool Wesleyans. This body like the Congregationalists had by now thrown up a knot of very powerful and influential families who were well-entrenched particularly in Brunswick and Wesley chapels. Daniel S. Leather was a great wine merchant (who stored his kegs in the Pitt Street chapel cellar), John Farnworth one of the leaders of the Toxteth timber interest, as was Thomas Lloyd, William Comer, the treasurer of the Wesleyan schools, was a leading cotton broker, Thomas Crook a barrister and Thomas Sands a very wealthy merchant and one of the most generous subscribers to connexional funds. These men however, some of whom like Sands later suffered sharp reversals of fortune and died in obscurity, were unimportant compared with Mr Thomas Kaye, the Wesleyan proprietor of the Courier newspaper from 1808 to 1856. This staunch Church and King organ had been battling against reformism for many years, and it was by now clear that Kaye was prepared to carry his High Tory attitudes into the internal politics of Brunswick chapel⁽⁴⁹⁾. In fairness to these men however it should be made clear that all accepted unquestioningly the duties which the Holy Community laid upon them. Apart from Kaye they were almost unknown in the life of the town, their energies were entirely spent on Wesleyan affairs and most were local preachers. When in fact one in a fit of temper pushed aside a poor door keeper at Pitt Street Chapel, refusing to show his class ticket, Dr Newton was not satisfied till public penance had been done⁽⁵⁰⁾. Such disciplinary considerations were however lost on the editors of the Circular who invented the term 'Brunswickers' to describe the wealthy faction of whose social position they were so desperately jealous.

(3) The Associationists (1834-5)

As time went on it became clear that the agitators were beginning to take up strategic positions. The depressed Leeds Street chapel was an obvious Cave Adullam. As early as 1830 Bunting had referred to a

'small faction' in this society⁽⁵¹⁾, which a year later had become 'a bad, radical faction, ever on the alert to seize any occasion to annoy us'⁽⁵²⁾. The Local Preachers meeting was another centre of discontent, for here the agitators could appeal strongly to the solid body of shopkeepers, clerks, teachers and artisans, men too unlettered and ignorant to be admitted to the Brunswick or Wesley pulpits which would only accept the services of a minister. Finally the Sunday Schools served a similar function as a mouthpiece of discontent. These 'nurseries of independent thought and manly feeling'⁽⁵³⁾ where Picton found a 'republican form of government' unique in Methodism, were the natural refuge of a rebellious laity. Here their feeling of social ostracism was intensified especially by the conviction (which was one of their very few real grievances) that the ministers and wealthy laymen were by now concentrating their efforts almost entirely on the day schools.

It would be easy from the foregoing to imagine that the discontent which erupted into the Associationist rebellion of 1834 was a movement of artisans who had suddenly found political consciousness amidst the reformist stirrings of the time. The church census of 1853 indeed showed that the Wesleyan Associationists did possess a slightly higher proportion of working-class adherents than the old Connexion, though the very poor, as the literature of the controversy shows, tended to stay with the Wesleyans. The Associationist leaders of 1834 do not however fit easily into this category. Even the kindest critic can hardly describe these men as other than social and psychological misfits. David Rowland typifies the dissidence of Dissent at its very worst, and seems to have inflicted successive 'rebellions' upon himself to satisfy some kind of pathological craving. In his secular calling he had been in succession shipbroker, tea-dealer, secretary to the Liverpool Pilots' committee and was now a bookkeeper. He was also as incapable of loyalty as of lasting friendship. Picton, a far more intelligent man, had likewise held a variety of positions, manager of a timber yard, surveyor and architect; he too during his lifetime was to be in and out of five different denominations. William Byrom was another unstable character, alternately schoolteacher, accountant and estate agent, and in his religious convictions, Wesleyan, Associationist, Wesleyan again, Wesleyan Reformer and Anglican. It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that his political convictions lurched violently from the radical left to high

Torysim⁽⁵⁴⁾. Even Henry Pooley, the ironmonger, the only really wealthy man among the Associationists, who had rejoined the Wesleyans by 1839, had had a very chequered career, having known imprisonment for debt before he took out a patent for his world-famous weighing machines. And so the story could be continued down to the humblest Associationist, Thomas Bew, a plasterer and one 'who could always discover some unpleasant clanking in the machinery and was ready with some advice to remedy it'⁽⁵⁵⁾. Apart from this innate fractiousness and an insecure position in society, the leading rebels had other features in common: they were mostly young, republican by temper, tinged with a liberal theology, and several had received the vote in 1832. Needless to add, not one remained loyal to the principles he had espoused in 1834.

The nation-wide agitation of this year naturally provided these men with an opportunity of which they were only too glad to avail themselves⁽⁵⁶⁾. On October 17th 1834 twenty seven laymen of the two circuits addressed a letter to the already notorious Dr Warren, stating that they had long groaned under a load of accumulated grievances which were now insupportable, and that they would never again submit to irresponsible authority⁽⁵⁷⁾. Nor had they to endure their sufferings much longer, for during the following three weeks all found themselves expelled, some instantaneously by the fiery, swarthy Samuel Jackson, superintendent of the North Circuit, others by the more scholarly, refined George Marsden of the South circuit, who proceeded with greater reluctance and greater tact, for he had already had experience of lay rebellion in the Leeds Organ Case⁽⁵⁸⁾.

The expelled, most of them class leaders, and many local preachers, at once organized themselves as the Liverpool Wesleyan Methodist Association, and took the Music Hall, Bold Street, a building always available to religious malcontents⁽⁵⁹⁾ to hold meetings of protest. The first, held on November 21st 1834, was reported at length in the press, and its proceedings published in pamphlet form. Overtures were made to the Manchester W.M.A., and a Grand Central Association formed, with Mr John Wood of Liverpool as joint secretary. Shortly afterwards the Liverpool -Associationists went into print again, with an "Affectionate Address to the private members of the Methodist Societies wherein the dangerous policy adopted by the Conference is briefly exposed". This of course amounted to an open appeal to others to join the expelled

leaders, and a declaration of war on the Conference party.

Now, as both sides strove to consolidate their position, a series of elaborate and almost semi-military manoeuvres began. Small groups of Associationists and their opponents crept secretly round the town under cover of darkness, their object being to seize control of the class meetings. Chapel doors were bolted and barred, but the 'ministerial party' appears to have won this first round of the conflict, for most class books were surrendered on demand, and this initial victory was won, as had not been the case in 1798, with a minimum of physical force. Only in Leeds Street were the Wesleyans actually beleaguered, only to be relieved by a strong detachment of 'Brunswickers'.

Meanwhile the withholding of class tickets and exclusions from the Lord's Table were continuing apace. All this meant added reinforcement for the Associationists who in December 1834 decided to publish under the editorship of Mr Picton a fortnightly magazine to voice their grievances, and to be called 'The Watchman's Lantern'. The Wesleyans countered in January 1835 with a journal of their own, 'The Illuminator'. The controversy thus acquired greater momentum, and, as both these journals circulated widely outside Liverpool, greater attention from the public at large.

By December 1834 the Music Hall, Bold Street, was packed to capacity for the weekly harangues of the Associationists, and on December 25th a love feast was celebrated with no less than 1700 in attendance. Over 120 persons had by now been expelled,⁽⁶⁰⁾ the vast majority from the turbulent Leeds Street chapel and a few from Pitt Street and Mount Pleasant, and 85 of these were chosen as class-leaders for, it was felt, the vast Music Hall crowd could best be organized for future activities on these traditional lines. On April 26th 1835 the Music Hall was formally opened for public worship, and a Mr James Lamb engaged as 'preacher'⁽⁶¹⁾. Shortly afterwards a room in Burlington Street in the north end of the town was also opened. In view of these events it is rather odd that as late as May 1835 the Associationists were still contending that their object was 'reformation not separation', for they had by now, wittingly or not, acquired all the trappings of a new denomination⁽⁶²⁾.

In June 1835 they registered a considerable success when the private

chapel at the Herculaneum Pottery was handed over to the W.M.A. (63). Much excitement was also aroused two months later when the Associationists sent delegates to the Wesleyan Conference at Sheffield which they found 'not at all favourable to reform' (64). Once again there was a loud disclaimer against any intention to form a separate religious body, but such had by now clearly emerged, and the extent of the separation was underlined when on September 19th Dr Warren opened a 'tabernacle' at nearby Prescott. When indeed the first anniversary meeting assembled at the Music Hall on November 13th 1835 it was resolved to erect a tabernacle in the north end of Liverpool itself, the building to be designed by Mr Picton (65). The breach was now complete.

All this time of course the literary battle between the two rival periodicals had been continuing apace. The Watchman's Lantern was on the whole more moderate in tone, though far more wordy, and had a natural advantage over its rival in that its editor was already used to religious polemics in the Circular: it devoted considerable space to the activities of the Association in other parts of the country. The Illuminator on the other hand adopted sledge-hammer tactics to crush the advocates of reform. It had declared in its first issue that its intention was 'to throw light on the bogs, marshes, low places and dunhills' where the Associationists were wallowing. It showed no mercy on the 'anarchists', 'the republican faction', or, as it termed them from the name of their principle leader, the first of the Leeds Street members to be expelled, 'the Rowlandites'. It poked fun, wherever it could, at the weekly 'performances' in the Music Hall, though fortunately it stopped short at unearthing the immorality charge brought against Rowland eighteen years previously. The Watchman's Lantern finally expired in November 1835, and the Illuminator in March 1836. Their demise was in a sense a recognition on both sides that separation had by this time reached a point of no return. In its later issues in fact the Illuminator had abandoned its vitriolic style altogether and, once the gravity of the schism was realised, had presented reasoned and earnest appeals to the Associationists to return to the parent fold, underlining its arguments by illustrations of the sad fate which had befallen earlier reform movements.

When we turn from these melancholy events to enquire what causes in addition to those which have appeared hitherto underlay this, the most

serious schism which ever rent Liverpool Wesleyanism, the abundance of surviving literary evidence⁽⁶⁶⁾ provides us with information far more adequate than that which is available from other towns, even from Manchester where the movement was more considerable and devastating. And at once a surprising fact emerges: the new Theological Institution which is supposed to have sparked off the revolt nationally occasioned in Liverpool little discontent. Six major grievances, two old and four new, were advanced off and on during the first stage of the revolt, and five of these were conveniently listed by the chairman at a rally held in the Music Hall on January 28th 1835. They were as follows:

(a) The ministers' violation of the Articles of 1795 and 1797. Complaints on this score were frequently heard, though, it must be confessed, the Associationists now played into their opponents' hands unashamedly when they demanded 'additional safeguards' to prevent the Plan of '95 being abused in the future, thus acknowledging that they were the real innovators. (b) The Leeds and Brunswick (Liverpool) organ cases. Once again neither of these arguments carried much real weight: the Leeds case was now eight years old, nor, till the Associationists recalled it, had most people remembered that there had been a Brunswick organ 'case' at all. (c) Special and unconstitutional District meetings of ministers to determine accusations against local preachers and others. This appears to have been the main grievance in Liverpool, at any rate after the first expulsions had taken place. (d) - The Theological Institution and Dr Warren's case⁽⁶⁷⁾, two matters on which very little was subsequently heard. (e) The prohibition by superintendent ministers of discussion at Quarterly Meetings of what properly concerned them, the most frequently voiced of all the Associationists' numerous complaints.

One further charge was later added by the rebels to this list, a most illuminating one: 'the gradiloquently trumpeted friendly leaning (on the part of Conference) towards the Church of England', a complaint first voiced in August 1835 and on several occasions afterwards, and which fitted in well with the charges of 'priestcraft' brought against Brunswick chapel where Thomas Kaye was a member.

Apart from these several grounds of discontent there were two additional points adduced by the Associationists to lend support to their case, but which the ministers rightly refused to regard as anything but

red herrings, deliberately introduced to divert attention from the real issues. The first was the alleged sufferings of the locally celebrated Dr Adam Clarke at the hands of Conference. The Illuminator had little difficulty in showing from his recorded utterances that Dr Clarke would have had little sympathy with the present agitation. The second was the case of the Rev. Robert Aitken, the Manx clergyman who had candidated unsuccessfully for the Wesleyan ministry and in the intervals of conducting his extravagant revivalist meetings appeared in this controversy in the self-appointed role of mediator between the two contending parties. Once again the ministers had little trouble in disposing effectively of the Rev. Robert Aitken and his 'persecutions'.

Underlying all these charges and countercharges however there rumbles through this Liverpool controversy the voice of social unrest which was never far from the surface even when the most delicate points of faith and order were under debate. The expelled leaders, referring to themselves in jest as 'disaffected proletarians'⁽⁶⁸⁾ now turned more bitterly than ever against Brunswick chapel as typifying that 'wealth, respectability and influence of Wesleyanism' which the Conference party vaunted so highly, and which they particularly abhorred. It was the members of this great central chapel who spurned the services of local preachers whose labours they had been glad enough to employ in years gone by⁽⁶⁹⁾, who installed organs and liturgies 'to gratify the wealthier part of the congregations' and 'infringed the sittings of the poor to beautify their buildings for the comfort of the rich'⁽⁷⁰⁾. Nor did the Illuminator try to disguise the fact that it condemned the Associationists not least because men of such lowly social origins or vulgar occupations dared to defy the collective wisdom of the ministerial Conference: it never tired for example of informing its readers that the rival Watchman's Lantern was managed by a coffee-roaster, a bootmaker and a publican, 'those scribblers as ignorant as untutored hottentots'⁽⁷¹⁾.

It would however be fatally easy to disparage the Liverpool Wesleyan leaders and to imagine them as concerned solely to defend the social privileges of their wealthy lay supporters, or to excise 'the fungus of democracy'⁽⁷²⁾, for it is precisely when the Associationists were waxing most eloquent in their democratic protestations that they veered closest to spiritual anarchism. It was in other words, when they were thrown by the logic of events back upon their own democracy, when they

began to boast proudly of themselves as 'men, Britons, and followers of Christ' ⁽⁷²⁾ and arrogate supreme powers to establish and govern their new church in whatsoever way they pleased, that we begin to realise against what the defenders of the old order were contending. They, as did their national leaders, staked their case on one principle alone, a principle which they believed was as fundamental to true Christianity as to historic Wesleyanism, their doctrine of the Christian ministry. It was this theological principle which they opposed to the Associationists' political reformism. 'Would you', asked the Illuminator', 'drag the Ministry into the mire of democracy, make it subservient to the passions of the people, despoil it of its divine origin and call?' The rebuttal of heresy and disorder, if not the very life of the Church itself, inhered in the Sacred Ministry: 'the Association may ask 'may we not be trusted?' We reply 'No, you may not'. Others have been led into this bog ... and this will be your call' ⁽⁷⁵⁾.

The manner in which these Wesleyan apologists disported themselves may well seem reprehensible in modern eyes, but their attempt to save their people from a democratic experiment for which they believed them wholly unprepared is not so easy to condemn. Certainly the later history of the W.M.A. in Liverpool reads very sadly, and when late in 1852 the Liverpool Associationists, once over a thousand strong, had been reduced to a mere handful of supporters debating the closure of their last remaining chapel, the Wesleyans could perhaps have read into this painful scene all the justification they needed for the uncompromising stand they had taken in the great crisis of 1834.

(4) Unease (1835-49)

All this however lay far in the future as far as the Wesleyans were concerned: their immediate task was to salvage whatever possible from the Associationist wreck. That they survived at all amazed one Associationist writer ⁽⁷⁶⁾, especially as another kind of minor crisis blew up in 1837 when the South circuit protested against the quality of the ministers Conference was sending them ⁽⁷⁷⁾. In reality this was part of a clever policy of providing 'conciliatory' pastors for the shattered North circuit, and for the south 'through' men who would keep firm control over the relatively undisturbed situation there ⁽⁷⁸⁾. Another factor aided the Wesleyans also: the Day Schools had survived

remarkably well. Only Richmond Fair school had to be closed altogether, and only Pitt Street school was otherwise seriously affected.

Weary, but still embattled, the denomination could begin to plan future strategy. Leeds Street was obviously depleted beyond hope, and was pulled down in 1837, the stone being used to build a new chapel in Great Homer Street. The latter was not opened till 1839, as the great gale of 1838 blew down the shell, but it was soon realized that it would be as different from Leeds Street as it was possible to imagine. The most select of all Liverpool Wesleyan Chapels, Great Homer Street was financed almost entirely by pew rents, and it was no uncommon sight to behold a string of twenty carriages outside the doors⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Soon Great Homer Street was overshadowing all the other chapels in the North circuit, except Brunswick; Pitt Street in particular continued to decline as the character of the neighbourhood changed⁽⁸⁰⁾. Heroic efforts were made to plant causes in the villages to the north, especially in Kirkdale. Nevertheless during the next ten years only in Bootle, West Derby, Waterloo and Walton did the establishment of a successful Sunday School lead to the erection or purchase of a small chapel⁽⁸¹⁾.

The South circuit made similar and on the whole more successful evangelistic efforts. Small societies were formed at Aigburth and Garston, and chapels were erected at Woolton (1835), Wavertree (1837), Old Swan (1839) and Aigburth Street (1843)⁽⁸²⁾. This last is particularly interesting in that it was built as a result of successful revival services among the newly arrived railway workers of the district⁽⁸³⁾. It should be seen as complementary to the erection of the new village chapels or great middle-class suburban churches like Great Homer Street. Unfortunately however it was in the crowded centre of the town that Wesleyanism was now beginning to fail. Here evangelism had almost ceased, and the class system was no longer working effectively. There was even developing a dangerous antipathy among wealthy Wesleyans to open-air work and tract distribution of any kind⁽⁸⁴⁾. Ned Sunners, the cabmen's bishop, may have been converted in Stanhope Street chapel, but found himself unable to evangelise the poor through Wesleyan agencies, by now rather hostile to laymen such as he, and so joined the Town Mission in 1838⁽⁸⁵⁾.

The small success of Wesleyanism in these years is in large measure to be explained not only by the disruption of 1835, but by the continuing

problem of indebtedness. The South circuit was seriously embarrassed and only in the later 1840s did the flourishing chapels of the North wake up to the dire effects this problem was having on denominational life: Brunswick for example began to tackle seriously the 'fearfully great' sum of £12,000 which by that time threatened the chapel's very existence, while Great Homer Street recognized that a debt of £8000 was a disgrace to a congregation of its size and affluence⁽⁸⁶⁾. Happily the debt problem did not lessen the charitable urge of the churches. In 1847 in fact there was founded the Wesleyan Benevolent and Dorcas Society which spent about £200 each year relieving distress among indigent persons of all sects (only 25% were in fact Wesleyans), and soon came to have a reputation previously enjoyed by the Strangers' Friend Society⁽⁸⁷⁾.

Throughout these years the Liverpool Wesleyans did not lack distinguished ministries⁽⁸⁸⁾. Theophilus Lessey, Dr W.W. Stamp, F.A. West, Dr. Newton and A.E. Farrar were amongst the best-known names in the denomination, but if one figure dominated the local circuits and radically changed the pattern of their activities, as well as their outlook, he was without doubt the Rev. Dr. Beaumont (South circuit, 1839-42; North 1842-45). Not merely was Beaumont a highly successful pastor, under whom the membership of the North circuit at last reached the 1,000 total again and that of the South was rescued from the doldrums of continuous decline; this remarkable man as a moderate Whig and foe of Bunting clashed with his formidable adversary over the Conference's high-handed attitude to the liberal 'Wesleyan Takings' in 1841 and from that time onwards began a deliberate policy of frustrating Bunting's wishes at all times, in the best interests, so he believed, of his denomination⁽⁸⁹⁾. An onslaught was made on the hired singers, chanting and liturgies in those chapels where Beaumont ministered, the Rev. James Caughey, the American revivalist who had been condemned by Bunting was invited to conduct meetings under Wesleyan auspices in 1843 & 45⁽⁹⁰⁾, friendly relations were opened up with the Associationists, support was lent to the non-denominational Town Mission⁽⁹¹⁾, and, (the crowning insult) Wesleyan participation in temperance affairs encouraged from 1842 onwards, and prominent Dissenters such as Raffles and Kelly invited to preach in Wesleyan pulpits and appear on Missionary

platforms⁽⁹²⁾. Beaumont was in fact determined to end once and for all the peculiar 'Church Methodist' character of Liverpool Wesleyanism. In this ambition he largely succeeded, but in the process provoked the last catastrophic disruption within the local churches.

(5) The Reformers (1849-51)

Not surprisingly a large number of Wesleyan laymen were glad to follow where Beaumont led. When the Wesleyan Conference met at Liverpool in 1847 in a disturbed and uneasy state, many prominent local officials and trustees were on the point of defection. They were a resentful group of malcontents, tired of Bunting's dictatorial attitudes, tired of their denomination's indifferent evangelistic success, and worn out with the insoluble burden of chapel debts. They differed from the Associationists in at least two ways: they were middle-aged or older men, and they enjoyed respect in their churches for their wealth and social position. They were the cream of the Wesleyan laity, the ~~men~~ who had remained loyal against the young aspirants of 1835, but could remain so no longer. Though the five very wealthy Wesleyan families, the Corners, Vernons, Kayes, Farnworths and Leathers, were not amongst them, the note of respectability was pronounced. Dr. Burrows for example, a well-known and rather eccentric Liverpool surgeon, was a disciple of Beaumont, a keen temperance advocate and an admirer of Caughey, William Byrom, the schoolmaster turned estate agent, had been expelled in 1835, subsequently readmitted and was now in the forefront of the renewed agitation, while other leading reformers included Thomas Lloyd, the Toxteth timber merchant, the first Wesleyan councillor elected (in 1845) as a Liberal, Thomas Riley, a hosier and haberdasher, P.L. McTaggart, another hosier, W.S. Chalkley, a biscuit baker, Edward Parnell, a shipbroker, John Smith, a hide merchant, and Thomas Ashton, the wealthiest of the party, a local preacher and Liverpool ironfounder. Liberals to a man, the Reformers, unlike their predecessors of 1835, were devoid of spite against the local Wesleyan leaders, basing their contentions solely on the doings of the national Conference. Hailing largely from the jaded South circuit, they drew little support from the North, where the Revs, Stamp, West and their flocks were far too busy with debt reduction schemes to afford time for polemics.

It was in September 1849 that the Reformers first began to hold protest meetings in Liverpool in the Lord Nelson Street or Great George

Street Assembly Rooms, to denounce the action of Conference in the 'Fly Sheets' controversy, its new policy of co-operating with the state in educational matters, and the expulsion of the 'Triumvirate', Dunn, Everett and Griffiths⁽⁹³⁾. For a whole year such meetings went on, though unlike the Associationists, the Reformers continued to attend their Wesleyan chapels and neither sought nor were rewarded with expulsion. Nevertheless from April 1850 onwards they were meeting regularly on W.M.A. premises and a formal break would be clearly only a matter of time. By October funds were being collected and a month later the Reformers, their demands remaining unsatisfied, formally resigned from the Wesleyan Society, taking large numbers of supporters with them. (Very few were in fact expelled)⁽⁹⁴⁾. Tentative attempts were made to constitute themselves a separate denomination, but by March 1851 it was clear that support was seriously on the wane, and that the Reformers were finding their home in other denominations, including particularly the Church of England and the W.M.A., or abandoning organized religion altogether⁽⁹⁵⁾. Though the combined circuit membership fell from 3650 in 1848 to 2520 in 1851 it was clear that the many who had 'ceased to meet' had neither the desire nor the enthusiasm to found yet another Methodist sect.

(6) The Mahogany Age (1852-83)

Dr. A. W. Harrison's laconic description of Methodism in the third quarter of the 19th century is from the Liverpool standpoint valid if it simply signifies that now the Wesleyans began to emulate the progress of the other Dissenters in providing plush middle-class chapels in the expanding suburbs, wrong if taken to indicate that Wesleyanism had now abandoned its mission to the working classes completely. The connexion, as few others were able to do, still ran through the whole gamut of social classes within a more liberalized but still authoritarian circuit system (for Conference had wavered on no aspect of ministerial competence throughout the crisis of 1849)⁽⁹⁶⁾ and attracted to its service men of widely differing backgrounds and capacities.

Of the two Liverpool circuits the North of course came out comparatively unscathed from the Reform crisis - indeed its morale and financial stability had been by 1852 almost completely restored. It is therefore hardly surprising that the next ten years saw a rapid expansion, centred mainly on the missionary enthusiasm of the Great Homer Street Church. In common with other denominations, though on a much wider scale, the

Wesleyans acquired mission rooms and halls and from these between 1857 and 1864 strong churches were built up. A mission and school on the north shore gave rise in 1857 to Cranmer chapel; similar developments took place in Rice Lane, Walton, and Salop Street, Kirkdale, whilst a small mission, begun in Sheridan Street, Bootle, in 1860 was rehoused in the great Balliol Road chapel in 1864, Methodism's first permanent settlement in Bootle village⁽⁹⁷⁾. Meanwhile, after a succession of fruitless attempts to establish a cause in Waterloo, a site was secured in Bath Street in 1857 and a chapel erected. Two years later, in the atmosphere of the Great Awakening, the work in this northern outpost had become so successful that a separate one-man Waterloo circuit was formed out of Liverpool North. Within a few years the original fifty-one member circuit had doubled in size, a second minister was added in 1862, and new causes built at Great Crosby (1863), Formby (1877) and Blundelsands (1880). The two latter churches attracted some prosperous Liverpool families which had moved out to these northern villages, and the membership of the Waterloo circuit, 234 in 1880 had grown to 411 by 1885.

The South circuit which had suffered most from the effect of the Reform agitation, could not be expected, initially at least, to emulate this achievement, and till 1857 there was a continuing sharp decline in membership. Pitt Street in the South circuit was however one of one of the first churches to be provided by Conference with a home missionary in the great enthusiasm for this type of church extension which gripped the denomination in the late 50s and early 60s. Soon the missionary was reporting great success among 'the neglected and ungodly English craftsmen and labourers who will prove a leaven in their streets and lanes'⁽⁹⁸⁾. New classes sprang up everywhere, and in 1857 a decision was taken to sell Mount Pleasant and erect two new chapels in Grove Street and Toxteth Park. In effect the historic chapel was not closed, but of the two new churches, Trinity Grove Street (1859), a fine Gothic chapel with stained-glass windows, was soon attracting highly respectable congregations, while St. John's Princes Park (1862) ministered to an even more socially exclusive elite. Work amongst the humbler classes was continued meanwhile by the old central chapels, and in the surrounding villages of Old Swan, Wavertree, Garston, Woolton and Aigburth.

In view of all this progress it was in 1863 deemed necessary to make further circuit divisions, and in this and the following year arrangements were made which proved determinative of the pattern of Liverpool Wesleyanism for the next twenty years. The North, numbering 1300 members, was divided into two circuits which derived their names from their new head chapels, Brunswick and Cranmer. Brunswick circuit, which embraced the extremely active Great Homer Street as well as the now more settled and conservative Brunswick itself, provided the necessary finance for this expansion - income from pew rents reached its height at £580 p.a. in 1870, after which date the character of the congregation changed very rapidly with the flight of middle-class families from the neighbourhood, while Great Homer Street which during these years endured the transition from a middle-class to an almost wholly working-class congregation, and where 'the respectable mechanics and artizans' were by 1884 delighting in gay, spontaneous services with plenty of shouting and ejaculations ⁽⁹⁹⁾ provided the evangelistic enthusiasm. A prosperous suburban chapel, often described as the north end's equivalent of Trinity Grove Street, was erected in Whitefield Road in 1866, whilst a gift of £9,000 from the Leather family enabled the circuit to build the Fairfield chapel two years later. In Anfield a mission room was opened in 1879 in Town Street, and another in the centre of Anfield village. These two classes were united in 1880, a chapel built the same year and enlarged four years later when Great Homer Street transferred four of its own classes to the new cause. Soon 'Anfield Wesleyan', a predominantly lower middle-class cause, had become one of the largest Protestant congregations in Liverpool, reaching its height in 1912 with a recorded Sunday evening congregation of 950, the third largest in the city. After only twenty years of separate existence Brunswick circuit returned a membership of over 1700.

The growth of the Cranmer circuit was hardly less impressive. Cranmer chapel suffered the effects of social change more rapidly than any other in Liverpool. A middle-class chapel when it was built, by 1884 Cranmer was surrounded by warehouses and hovels and was the sole Nonconformist cause witnessing in an area sometimes described as without parallel for squalour in the whole of England. Amidst these rapid social changes therefore it was Balliol Road rather than Cranmer which

in this circuit provided the spearhead of missionary advance. The cause in working-class Kirkdale developed very rapidly, a large new building was erected in ~~Woolton~~^{Walton} Road in 1880, and this chapel, which recorded an evening attendance of 687 at the time of 1881 census was recognized at that time as by far the largest Wesleyan congregation in the town. Missionary work in Litherland had meanwhile led to the erection of a new chapel in Litherland Park in 1875. Altogether membership of the Cranmer circuit had risen from a mere 300 at its inauguration to 820 in 1875, and 1045 a decade later.

At the same time as the North circuit was being divided, the South underwent a similarly necessary and spiritually beneficial operation. The Pitt Street - Grove Street - Aigburth Street - Mount Pleasant group of churches was separated as the Pitt Street circuit from Wesley chapel with its collection of small scattered mission halls and classes in Toxteth Park and the villages south of the town. Pitt Street (renamed Grove Street in 1875) proved as vigorous as either of the two northern circuits in chapel building and other forms of missionary endeavour. Rosalind Street and Cardwell Street were two mission halls rebuilt as chapels in 1877 and 1880 respectively. Larger chapels were erected in Victoria Park, Wavertree, in 1873 and at Huyton in 1868. All these causes catered for a fairly lowly social stratum, but St. Paul's Stoneycroft erected in 1865 served a constituency unique in Liverpool Methodism and rare within the whole connexion. For not only was St. Paul's, as its dedication would imply, built in the high Wesleyan style and suitably accoutred with plush seats, gilt-edged hymnals and a fine paid choir: it even contained a 'squire's pew' for a local notoriety, Mr Edwin Green. The Church Methodist tradition, it was clear, was not yielding to more democratic tendencies on all fronts⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

In the southernmost of the new circuits Wesley Chapel also after the divisions of 1863-5 clung tenaciously to its liturgical worship; here the congregation, despite the changing character of Stanhope Street remained 'highly respectable', and the worship forthright and fervent, particularly in the evenings⁽¹⁰¹⁾. Between them Wesley and St. John's missionised a larger area and saw to the erection of more new buildings than any of the other four Liverpool circuits. A small but magnificent church dedicated to St. James was built in Woolton in 1866, to serve

a similar knot of wealthy families as attended St. John's and St. Paul's. St. Peter's, Toxteth Park, erected in 1878, would have developed in a similar manner but for the rapidly changing character of the area and the influx of workingclass families. Lodge Lane chapel (Erected 1883) was the product of intensive missionary work among the artizan families of that area, though the actual building was paid for by the wealthy Fowler family of St. John's⁽¹⁰²⁾. A small chapel in Elmswood Road, Aigburth Vale, was built in 1875, while further south two chapels arose in Garston, Island Road (1879) to serve the more respectable neighbourhood, and where all the available pews were soon rented, and Banks Road (1882), to cater for the dockland area. (The Garston chapels are thus from the social angle a microcosm of Liverpool Wesleyanism as a whole).

Inevitably it is the sociological aspect which is most fascinating in this story of Wesleyan expansion after 1852, for here there was little of that uneasy tension between the established suburban chapels and the down-town missions, and none of the uncomfortable condescension of the former to the latter as is found in some other denominations. Perhaps however this tends to conceal certain other features of Wesleyan life at this time which are equally striking: the different methods which within the circuit system were employed to build up new causes; the initiative of a whole circuit as in the case of St. Peter's, of a particular church, as with Anfield, the result of an outright gift by a wealthy layman, as with Fairfield, or of tireless missionary labours by a group of local preachers which comprises the largely forgotten story behind chapels such as Lodge Lane⁽¹⁰³⁾. Secondly, possessing a network of churches throughout the town and yet being splendidly isolated from all other communions, and inspired by a vigorous Arminian theology and a class-system which gave it tangible expression, the Wesleyans tended inevitably to arrogate to themselves spiritual responsibility for the whole community, and regard each chapel as in some sense a parish church. The 'parish' atmosphere in fact pervades the life and witness of most Wesleyan churches of the period. The division of the district by streets and the assumption of pastoral oversight for a settled number by each class, the organization on the same basis of charitable aid or tract distribution or even open-air preaching all point to this interesting and perhaps imperfectly understood imitation of the pastoral organization of the larger episcopal churches.

Finally, for the Wesleyans church extension and schoolbuilding were the obverse and reverse of the same evangelistic process, and one without the other would have been incomprehensible. Usually in fact the planting of a Sunday School preceded the erection of a church, and a mere tabulation of the day-school achievement of the Wesleyans is itself a testimony to their educational zeal. Even after a half century of lay rebellion two strong schools still endured, those in Erskine Street attached to Brunswick Chapel and catering for 650 scholars, and Prince Edwin Street, attached to Great Homer Street (700 scholars). During the next twenty years of mid-Victorian prosperity five more day schools were added. Cranmer chapel contributed a school for 630 children in Boundary Street, Whitefield Road one for 650 children adjoining the chapel, Trinity a school for 600 in Vine Street, Waterloo an establishment for 400 in Wesley Street, and, to set the seal on this impressive achievement, Wesley chapel erected its Wesleyan Higher Grade School in Windsor Street in 1866. Altogether a total of over 4000 children were receiving education in Wesleyan day schools throughout the whole of the second half of the century, a figure which far exceeded the numbers attending the few surviving British Schools.

By the year 1882 the five Liverpool circuits numbered between them over 5000 members with an estimated 30,000 adherents. Brunswick contributed 1650 members, Cranmer 980, Pitt Street and Grove Street 950, Wesley 1420, and Waterloo 250. Two further circuit rearrangements were now felt to be desirable and were effected the same year. The Great Homer Street circuit, consisting of Great Homer Street chapel, Whitefield Road, Anfield and a number of halls and preaching rooms, was formed out of the Brunswick circuit, each circuit being allotted after some delay a staff of three ministers. This move was certainly justified in the circumstances, and was perhaps overdue. The separation of a two-man St. John's circuit, consisting of St. John's, St. James and Aigburth Vale, from the Wesley circuit was however unwise, and was only carried out at the behest of the wealthy families of St. John's who desired to be disassociated from the meaner chapels. Even more reprehensible was the separation of St. James Woolton from the new circuit in 1895. St. James which in that year was constituted a circuit on its own had a mere 30 members, albeit very wealthy ones. This tragic move was indeed independency with a vengeance, and was a glaring

example of that destruction of the circuit system (or rather fissiparity at the behest of an affluent clique of laymen) which had become the curse of the denomination ever since lay representation to Conference had been permitted in 1878.

This should not however be allowed to detract from the greatness of the Wesleyans' achievement in the third quarter of the 19th century. Prosperous and enthusiastic churches such as those which developed at this time deserved and received a succession of the ablest ministers of the denomination. - Theophilus Lessey, Marmaduke Osborn, W.W. Stamp, Thomas M'Cullagh, R. Wilberforce Starr, 'Fiji' Wilson, Francis A. West, T.G. Selby and Benjamin Gregory ranked among the finest of Wesleyan orators, while for a period of ten years in the 60s and 70s the Liverpool churches enjoyed the services of Dr. W.H. Dallinger, the distinguished biologist, who imparted an added degree of respectability to a denomination not hitherto renowned for its learned ministry.

It was not however men like these who sustained the evangelistic work in the poorer areas, for just as the Wesleyans embraced all types of social class within their system, they made no secret of the fact that they recruited and deployed their ministers with this end constantly in view. A man such as the Rev. John Walton, declared the Porcupine in 1864, "finds congenial work among the lowest and most ignorant classes of society. Men with other and finer gifts may be detailed to the other side, in which the aggression is directed against the higher and better educated classes"⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. The same journal found that even the great Luke Tyerman was best fitted for 'revival' work, appealed mostly to 'gross and callous' minds, and was not at home in the 'newer' type of refined Wesleyanism⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. The Rev. John Colwell, remarked the Liverpool Review two decades later, was a blunt, forthright working man, ideally fitted for the Great Homer Street congregation - he would not fare so well at Whitefield Road⁽¹⁰⁶⁾.

As with the Presbyterians, the suburban expansion of Wesleyanism accompanied a switch to political Liberalism within the denomination. By 1877 the Tory 'Critic' was lamenting that three young Wesleyan ministers had so far forgotten their traditional loyalty as to be engaging actively in the work of the Junior Reformers⁽¹⁰⁷⁾. The denomination's most notorious public man was now in fact Mr William Oulton, handsome,

energetic, one of the wealthy Woolton set, a moderate drinker and ardent theatre-goer but a devout high church Wesleyan nonetheless, always possessed of a somewhat superior air, but in the 70s the hope of the 'advanced' section of the Liberal Party.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ That Oulton in 1885 suddenly emerged as the undisputed leader of the town's Liberal Unionists shocked his radical friends, but his political conversion was paralleled, as will become clear, by a similar reaction among his fellow Wesleyans. The dalliance with political Liberalism had been unnatural and short-lived.

(7) The Second Wesleyan Revival (1883-1914)

The itinerant system made it impossible for any one Wesleyan minister to make a permanent impression on the life of the city, but in 1872 there was stationed in Liverpool one who not merely broke down the rigid rulings on itinerancy by sheer force of personality and the success of his missionary labours, but acquired so great a reputation in the community that in a very real sense Charles Garrett⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ and Liverpool Wesleyanism became synonymous. Appointed to Pitt Street Mission in 1872, within three years Garrett had achieved such outstanding evangelistic success that it was only fitting that he should have been asked to lead the official city welcome to the evangelist Moody in 1875. - It was an historic meeting, not merely because there was then born the idea of the Co^oca Rooms organization⁽¹¹⁰⁾, but because Moody, backed by a number of Presbyterian merchants, undertook that he would bring every possible pressure to bear upon the Conference leaders to ensure that Garrett's appointment to Liverpool was made permanent, and that Pitt Street was constituted the nucleus of a Central Mission, free from the cramping restrictions of the circuit system, and free to experiment with new forms of evangelistic enterprise. Conference agreed, Pitt Street was formally separated from the Grove Street circuit, and the first Central Mission in Wesleyanism thus inaugurated⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

Of all his Nonconformist contemporaries in Liverpool Garrett was the most firmly traditionalist, and could only have risen to greatness in so disciplined and exclusive an atmosphere as the holy community of mid-19th century Wesleyanism still fostered among its adherents. His sturdy patriotism⁽¹¹²⁾, his sermon illustrations (drawn from gallows or battle-field scenes) smack of the earliest Wesleyan preaching. - There was moreover not the slightest deviation from Arminian orthodoxy, and Garrett seems typical of the later 19th century Wesleyan clergy whose preoccupation

with experiential faith made them impervious to the impact of German Higher Criticism⁽¹¹³⁾. Popery and Socianism^{nt} were to him as to Wesley the real enemies; Seeley or the Tubingen School unmentionable, or perhaps unknown. Yet this theological preaching, old-fashioned and uncritical though it was, had a strangely moving and persuasive quality which not only drew the crowds but attracted the admiration even of Unitarians⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

Garrett could not however live completely in a vanished age. Before his ordination he had been employed as full-time agent of the Anti-Corn Law League; during his Preston ministry he had both come under the spell of the Temperance crusade, and seen to the full the disastrous effects of the cotton famine on Lancashire life. In many ways the historical circumstances of the later 19th century impinged upon the traditional patterns of his thought.

This tension between the old and new accounts for the inconsistency of much that Garrett said and wrote. In addresses to young ministers for example he exhorted them at one and the same time to shun science, politics and even philosophy, and yet to take their place in all movements which lead to national righteousness. The laity too were at one time urged to content themselves with the simple Wesleyan ethics: gain, save, give, and shun all secular temptations, yet at another were encouraged to use their political and social power to the full to bring about by legislation the removal of abuses. For Bunting's hatred of democracy akin to his hatred of sin, Garrett substituted an opposite doctrine: "the affairs of the nation are your affairs as much as anybody's and you cannot neglect them without danger". Indeed by taking a leading part in the establishment of the Methodist Recorder and the consequent destruction of the old Watchman, he did as much as Hugh Price Hughes to ensure the victory of lay democracy in the Wesleyan Connexion⁽¹¹⁵⁾.

Garrett however was old-fashioned enough to believe that sin was the cause of poverty and crime, and that conversion would lead automatically to a better way of life (a conviction deepened by his experience at the Mission). He believed nonetheless that the Church ought to create conditions 'in which it was easier for men to do right', and this implied teetotalism, a creed to which he had been converted early in life despite the warning of a Liverpool friend that it was 'a Manchester

trick, a scheme of those radicals' ⁽¹¹⁶⁾. For Garrett teetotalism was the only form of social reformation which he was prepared to recognise, and his temperance principles did in fact blind him to the very existence of other forms of social abuse. It effectively sealed his mind against the need for Trade Unionism, to the significance of the political struggle, to the grievances of Ireland. ('The Irish have but to raise the cry of 'No Drink' instead of 'No Rent' in order to secure affluence and prosperity'), and above all, to educational reform ⁽¹¹⁷⁾. Drink alone, according to Garrett, made compulsory education necessary, and it was in a temperance sermon that he defined the true end of education thus: 'Professor Huxley says that our educational system should have its foot in the gutter and its top in the university. We say that our ladder should have its foot in the home, and its top in heaven, that the children should be cared for by Christian parents in infancy, should enter school, pass through it into the church militant, and so on to the church triumphant'. This was language which few Nonconformists could by this time comprehend. In men like Garrett traditional Wesleyanism was waging its last rearguard action against the secular assumptions of an increasingly pluralist and agnostic society,

From one depressed chapel with a membership of less than 200 the Liverpool Mission grew in the course of forty years to a dozen or so mission centres with a membership of 900 and a total of adherents four or five times that figure ⁽¹¹⁸⁾. Pitt Street showed the way. Here the gallery was floored and turned into a chapel, the body of the building being used for social work among sailors, and the preacher's house was turned into an old ladies' home. Templar Hall (formerly the Cambridge Music Hall), the most successful of the branches, was taken in 1883, and this large building was by 1890 filled to overflowing. Stitt Street Mission was founded the same year to serve the needs of a notorious rookery ⁽¹¹⁹⁾, while in 1884 work originally begun in a disused slaughter-house in Phythian Street led to the erection of Phythian Hall, a building which held 365 and was regularly packed to capacity ⁽¹²⁰⁾. A spectacular work was also begun in the same year, 1883, in Soho Street, where a terrible incident in the white slavery traffic led the Wesleyans to purchase Richmond Hall for relief and evangelistic work. Soon this building too was as full as it had been in the great days of earlier revivals, and the Old Baptist chapel in Soho Street was taken

in 1889 to continue the work, the unsatisfactory premises in Richmond Hall being closed the same year. Branch Missions of Soho Street were also established in Mansfield and Christian Streets⁽¹²¹⁾.

Cranmer chapel whose physical surroundings were by now appalling was added to the Mission in 1890, though its northerly location led to its being transferred back to the Bootle circuit in 1910. Hutchinson Hall was built for work in the Mill Street area in 1893, and subsequently enlarged several times as activities grew. By this time also there had arisen out of the missionary work a number of lads' and girls' homes to cater for orphans and needy children of all kinds. With typical Wesleyan realism these (which at their height numbered six in all) were carefully graded from those catering for the very rough to the two which were positively genteel (good behaviour secured promotion from one type of home to another). Methodist employers provided work for such young persons and a 'spirit of independence' was fostered by charging the older children a small fee for board and lodging. The anonymous London journalist who investigated the Homes in 1890 found them in general sensibly run and humane.

Finally, following the death of Garrett, Mount Pleasant chapel which, reconstituted as Central Hall, had been added to the Liverpool Mission in 1884, and Pitt Street were both closed and the purchase money used to build the huge £45,000 Central Hall building in Renshaw Street, opened in January 1906. Garrett had always opposed the centralising of the Mission's functions in this way, and the idea of the Hall, though advertised as a memorial to him, he would certainly have rejected. Under the leadership of the Rev. John Jackson however Central Hall in the first ten years of its existence could regularly attract a Sunday evening congregation of over 2000. It was only in the difficult days after the Great War that, as Garrett had feared, the central Mission began to swallow up one by one all the branches until now only one (Hutchinson Hall) remains.

Perhaps the strangest aspect of the Liverpool Mission is that through its agency Liverpool Wesleyanism somehow rediscovered its soul at the very time that the other Dissenting denominations were rapidly losing theirs. The inner character of the revival is therefore no less a significant subject for investigation as the outward record of its statistical growth.

The most striking feature of the Mission is the way in which the traditional pattern of the Methodist circuit system with all its complex organization for evangelism applied here as elsewhere. 'This is no P.S.A.', declared a lay missionary of Cranmer Chapel, 'men who come here get converted'. Though indeed the communion rail was more often a penitent rail, and the minister's vestry an Inquiry Room than was common in other city churches, the traditional routine of preaching services, communion and love feasts, and above all the class system (which was found peculiarly suitable for work of this nature) prevailed here as elsewhere - nor in fact would the Methodists have known any other way of conducting their affairs. What was new in the Mission was the employment of lay missionaries, rough, working-class, strong-armed and strong-willed men like William Chadwick, an ex-miner, at Cranmer, James Dobson at Templar Hall, Mr Evans, brother-in-law of Gipsy Smith at Hutchinson Hall, or J.A. Lee, a former Suffolk iron-moulder, at Wesley Hall. Such men were devoted Wesleyans, and their work was 'frankly denominational'. Other churches and missions were ignored completely, and though the atmosphere of the services was charismatic and boisterously informal, striking some as rather like 'an open-air meeting with a roof', the ecclesiastical setting was as different from the sentimental evangelicalism of Sun Hall as it is possible to imagine.

Each mission was of course both spiritual haven and benevolent agency for its numerous and eager supporters. Once again however the Free breakfasts, toy distributions, tontine societies, clothing clubs etc. mark no advance on the practice of previous decades - the novel social experiments which characterise Collier's work at Manchester were obviously unacceptable in conservative Liverpool. There remains the difficult problem of the class structure of the missions. Here the overwhelming impression is that the work was chiefly concerned with what contemporaries were pleased to call the 'respectable working class'. Success was undoubtedly achieved among the desperately poor, particularly in Toxteth, and the complaint is often heard in the Mission Reports that when a family is converted and becomes respectable, it usually moves away from the area of the local mission which thus became little more than a spiritual and social transit-camp. The real nature of the Mission is revealed most plainly in the practice of the congregation at Wesley Hall, itself situated in a fairly respectable area but on the

edge of slumdom, which after the Sunday evening service would make their way to the Mansfield and Christian Street Mission rooms, collecting many of the destitute and ungodly poor on the way, and staging openair preaching, or spontaneous indoor services for their less fortunate bretheren. And thus 'the work of reclamation' (their favourite description of what they were engaged upon) reflected the traditional Wesleyan emphasis on the civilising mission of the Church as a natural outgrowth of its passion for souls. For this the Mission workers did not themselves apologise nor except on the shallowest grounds can they really be taken to task by present day critics of the late Victorian Church.

It is sometimes stated that the success of the Central Missions at the turn of the century helped to disguise the real decay which was taking place in other parts of the Wesleyan Connexion. The Liverpool evidence fails however to support this view. Here Garrett's work should be seen rather as a fillip to the older circuits which received fresh impetus from the revivalism now radiating from those depressed central causes which for years they had been accustomed to regard as the problem churches of the city.

Naturally the two circuits in the prosperous and expanding northern suburbs developed most rapidly. Waterloo with 400 members in 1883 had 810 in 1914. A chapel was erected at Seaforth in 1886, Formby mission was opened in 1888, and Wesley Hall, Birchdale Road, Formby, was purchased in 1907. Blundelsands had been entirely rebuilt in 1891, and the work of the older Waterloo church progressed steadily. The Bootle circuit succeeded even more spectacularly in its ambitious programme of church extension. (The name Cranmer circuit had been retained for this group of churches till 1890 when Cranmer chapel was transferred to the Liverpool Mission). Here with the generous financial backing of Mr J.J. Mack, the Bootle shipowner, and the Matthews family (paint manufacturers) new buildings arose in quick succession. A small building was opened in Cyprus Road in 1888 and enlarged to accommodate 450 in 1893, Brook Road, Walton, and Litherland chapels were entirely rebuilt in 1889, schools erected at Bootle in 1890 and at Walton in 1908, a new Aintree Mission Hall opened in 1898 and one in Cowley Road in 1902. Marsh Lane Chapel and Schools, Bootle, were opened in 1904, and the mission at Linacre which began in two cottages in 1898 was given additional

buildings in 1900, 1905 and 1909. Once more it is clear from the siting of these new buildings that this circuit was serving a very mixed constituency: the Wesleyans' efforts were certainly not confined as were the Congregationalists to the more fashionable areas of this northern development. The Bootle circuit was in fact distinguished for its missionary spirit, and with its six ministers and thirty-two local preachers and its refusal to concentrate ministerial effort exclusively on the larger churches, was often held up by proud Wesleyans as a shining example of how the time-honoured circuit system could be made to function, with suitable and dedicated lay leadership⁽¹²²⁾.

Other circuits registered less remarkable success than this, but were not untouched by the missionary enthusiasm of the times. In the south Wesley circuit (954 members in 1885, 917 in 1896 and 960 in 1914) saw Lodge Lane, St. Peter's and the two Garston churches gradually increase in strength, though a chapel purchased in Smithdown Road in 1897 failed to prosper and was soon closed. Wellington Avenue was built in 1903 and soon became another thriving cause.

Grove Street circuit (701 members in 1881, 770 in 1914) was now suffering from a population movement away from the Abercromby district; the Churches in Wavertree and Stoneycroft were however receiving many new members, and a new cause founded in Elm Hall Drive in 1902 was embarking on fund-raising efforts for the building of schools and a church (not in fact finally completed till 1928). Great Homer Street circuit despite some difficulties continued to bask in the spectacular development of the Anfield Church, whose Sunday School was by 1905 by far the largest, whose congregation the fourth largest in the whole city, and whose Netherfield Road Mission (1898) was a hive of activity. Circuit membership 974, in 1885, stood at 1050 in 1914.

The other three Liverpool circuits failed to record any advancement of much significance. Woolton was completely static, and St. John's, the other 'aristocratic' circuit, which should never have been given autonomy, was suffering severely from the removal of wealthy families from the Princes Park area. Though the cause at Aigburth Vale was prospering, and a new iron chapel was erected there in 1904, circuit membership declined from 437 in 1885 to 201 in 1896 and to 198 in 1912. The real trouble-spot was however the old Brunswick circuit (740

members in 1885, 658 in 1896 and 490 in 1914). Though Tuebrook chapel (rebuilt in 1886) attracted new members and the old building at West Derby was replaced by a new church at Crosby Green in 1909, the central chapels and especially Brunswick itself were being gradually denuded of members. Here, as the Roman Catholic and Jewish population of the area increased, the mission rooms were being one by one abandoned, and a feeling of frustration, almost of despair, had set in well before the outbreak of the First World War.

With this exception however their achievements and their prospects must have appeared extremely gratifying to the Liverpool Wesleyans of the Edwardian area. Their work in the centre of the city had earned almost universal approval, and Bishop Ryle himself poured encomia on the head of the 'model Methodist', the Rev. Charles Garrett. The Wesleyans, for three generations misunderstood and abused, were now so far accepted by the other denominations that wealthy Anglicans and Presbyterians contributed generously to their work, unashamedly and exclusively denominational though it was. And with Oulton as their acknowledged leader in the secular life of the city as was Garrett in the religious, the Wesleyans after 1885 recovered the sturdy, if conventional, Toryism which had been their political creed in the early part of the century.

An occasional Wesleyan, such as T.H. Williams of Walton or Thomas Utley of West Derby, in the closing years of the century took his place in the Council Chamber on the Liberal benches (though a few more of this persuasion secured election to the Bootle Council where the denomination tended to be more inclined to Liberalism), but the Wesleyans' normal outlook resembled that of the Presbyterian community. Both denominations, wisely perhaps, swam with the political currents of the city, not against them⁽¹²³⁾. It might be recalled that the gentle and kindly Mason Hutchinson, the corn merchant who gave so much of his time and money to the Central Mission, was the same man who as Conservative Lord Mayor in 1911 had to bear the odium of what Winston Churchill called 'the objectionable step' of calling in troops to break up the Liverpool Transport strike of that year. Once again, though in totally different circumstances from those of Bunting's day, a prominent Wesleyan had to take a firm stand against that civil commotion which had always been the denomination's private nightmare.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE METHODIST SECTS,

THE DEMOCRACY OF DISSENT.

The interplay between the slow growth of particular sects and an unfavourable social milieu is nowhere more clearly illustrated in the case of Liverpool than in the unrelieved failure of Primitive and Free Methodism to emulate in any degree the success of the Wesleyan body. To compare the strength of the Methodist New Connexion in the Potteries, of the Primitives in Hull or Sunderland, of the Wesleyan Methodist Association in Rochdale or Manchester, of the Wesleyan Reformers in Sheffield with the pathetic achievements of all these bodies in Liverpool is to realise the striking effect which the absence of factory or mine workers from an urban community produced upon the local religious situation. The present chapter is thus a record of hopeless struggle against overwhelming odds, of denominations regarded by the city at best as quaint anachronisms, at worst as alien intrusions trespassing on territory reserved for others. Had the Methodist sects on their successive occasions of crisis expired altogether it would have engendered little surprise, nor would their demise have been particularly regretted by any other religious body.

(A) The Methodist New Connexion (1797-1907)

The New Connexion, the oldest of the Methodist sects in Liverpool, has an even more depressing history than the rest. The 250 original members were designated one of the seven member circuits when the original 'New Itinerancy' was constituted by the Leeds Conference of 1797, and two preachers were appointed to the town, the Revs. Cummins and Mallinson⁽¹⁾. At once these two began to quarrel with one another, and with the lay leaders and as early as December 1797 the former was writing to Kilham that his church in Liverpool was 'not a bed of roses'⁽²⁾. Financial difficulties were also pressing, and it was not till 1799 that the rented premises in Maguire Street were given up, and two chapels opened⁽³⁾, Ebenezer, a tiny building at the north end, and Zion, Murray Street, a more substantial structure, octagonal in shape and doric in style, and described by a contemporary as one of the neatest chapels in Liverpool⁽⁴⁾.

Few preachers of distinction could be attracted to this difficult town. Thus the Rev. Richard Watson, the great theologian, served the Connexion in Liverpool between 1806 and 1812, just before he rejoined the Wesleyans, but finding his salary insufficient, became a leader writer for the Liverpool Courier and earned some local fame as a vigorous

advocate of the war against France in opposition to the Unitarian, William Roscoe⁽³⁾. Largely through his efforts a cause was planted in Wavertree in 1813, for which a great connexional effort was held the following year. The chapel however failed to prosper and was closed shortly afterwards.

The Rev. Thomas Allin also, one of the foremost preachers and thinkers of the denomination, exercised a valuable two years' ministry in Liverpool between 1828 and 1830, increasing the membership of the two chapels from 246 to the record number of 508, and establishing a third chapel, named Bethel, in two converted cottages in St. James Road at the south end of the town.⁽⁶⁾

After this fresh start the 1830s saw a flurry of activity. The work at Ebenezer was transferred to Bond Street in 1833, and then to a new chapel in Bevington Hill in 1839, that at Bethel to Park Place chapel opened in 1834, while the congregation at Zion removed to Bethesda chapel, Hotham Street, purchased from the Congregationalists in 1838⁽⁷⁾.

By this date however circuit membership was again reduced to 350, and appalling financial difficulties beset the churches. Zion for example had never been redecorated since its opening, and when it was, the resulting indebtedness led to a Chancery suit, Bevington Hill and Park Place were both situated in far from prosperous areas, and the former in particular drew its support mainly from poor labourers who could hardly contribute to its upkeep. Only two wealthy families were members of the Connexion in Liverpool, the Robinsons and the Fowlers, and to their generosity the three churches chiefly owed their continued existence.

The Rev. Dr. William Cooke, the greatest of the Connexion's preachers, was minister in Liverpool from 1840-41, taking over a very unsettled circuit from a former superintendent who had recently defected to the W.M.A.⁽⁸⁾. His efforts however were largely unavailing, and membership continued to decline to 318 in 1853, and to 283 in 1857. The Rev. W. Mills appointed to Liverpool the following year, could only describe the three churches as 'the worst in the Connexion'. Tiny congregations, crippling debts and a complete lack of spiritual life and had almost led to a cessation of the work altogether⁽⁹⁾.

In desperation, rather than as a gesture of hope, a new chapel was built in Chatham Place, Edge Hill, in 1861⁽¹⁰⁾, but quickly became as

moribund as the rest. Drastic remedies were obviously called for, and the M.N.C. Conference, meeting at Longton in 1868, resolved that in view of the declining state of all the Liverpool churches (total membership stood now at only 216), they should be sold, and one new cause established in their place. All were as a result disposed of, except Park Place which was attended by the Fowlers and Robinsons, and which resolved to carry on, and a new building, known as St. Domingo chapel, was erected in Breckfield Road at a cost of £3500 a year later. This concentration of effort was rewarded by an increasing degree of solvency, though circuit membership hovered around the 200 mark for the next twenty years. Then, under two notable ministries, those of the Revs. T. Rider and W.D. Gunstone (1894-1904) a great revival occurred at St. Domingo which became in the later 1890s full to excess. It was thus a circuit of over 400 members which in 1907 joined with the United Methodist Free Churches as the United Methodist Church in Liverpool, the two chapels, Park Place and St. Domingo becoming circuits in their own right (a third cause, a small mission in Stanley Road conducted for many years by the latter church, was transferred to the Independent Methodists in 1913).

The lofty ideals of the first batch of Wesleyan reformers had failed to bear much fruit even after 120 years of heartbreaking effort, yet their story is not without interest, and two of its more unexpected by-products are particularly noteworthy: it was in Park Place chapel that in 1861 the young William Booth was formally expelled from the M.N.C. and left to found the Salvation Army; a decade and more later it was the young men of St. Domingo chapel who formed a football team which grew into the redoubtable Everton. Schism frequently produces some odd results - none quite as curious as these.

(B) Primitive Methodism (1821-1914)

Though William Clowes, one of the co-founders of Primitive Methodism, preached in the streets of Liverpool as early as 1812⁽¹¹⁾, it was not till April 1821 that evangelists were sent by the Burland branch of the Connexion to 'open up' the town. In April of that year John Ride was arrested for street preaching in Liverpool, but was released through the kindly intervention of Dr Adam Clarke, and in May James Roles, though several times assaulted, succeeded in forming a class of seven persons in a room in Upper Dawson Street, which he placed

under the care of Mr. J. Platt, late of Faddiley, Cheshire⁽¹²⁾. With the help of preachers from both Burland and Preston Brook, the little society grew, though not, according to Thomas Bateman, one of the connexion's first historians, 'as fast as we expected'. Late in 1821 however a chapel in Maguire Street was rented from the Swedenborgians⁽¹³⁾ and two years later, successful preaching stations having been established in various parts of the town and the outlying villages, Liverpool was constituted a separate circuit, welcoming as its first ministers John Abbey, and one of the Primitives' formidable woman preachers, Sarah Spittle. Maguire Street chapel, 'Old Mother Maguire' or 'The Glory Hole', as it was affectionately known, was situated in a desperately poor part of the town, and at once became the centre of fervid revival activity. Coloured persons attended in large numbers; the congregation would often stamp and shout in spiritual ecstasy, leaping over the forms and out into the street. In this way, according to the journal of William Knowles⁽¹⁴⁾ 'many persons found liberty, and some received the deeper baptism of the Holy Spirit'. Some of these early conversions were indeed spectacular, particularly that of Joseph Brown, the noted pugilist who, while staggering along Maguire Street after a brutal contest, stepped into the chapel and was at once converted⁽¹⁵⁾.

By 1834 membership of the Liverpool circuit stood at over 200, and it was decided to erect two more chapels in the town to supplement the work at Maguire Street. Premises were accordingly opened in Prince William Street and Pleasant Street the same year, though the latter proved unsuitable, and the work was transferred to a chapel in Walnut Street shortly afterwards. The next fifteen years however saw 'steady and painstaking rather than phenomenal progress', and most effort was expended on evangelistic work on the Wirral rather than in the Liverpool churches. Hence the first circuit plan to survive, that of 1849, shows only the three town chapels, though there were by now several preaching stations in the Birkenhead area and others in Limekiln Lane, Bootle and Garston.

This year 1849 however witnessed an important development - when Prince William Street and Walnut Street combined and took the Seamen's Church, Rathbone Street, as a centre for evangelistic work.

Enormous energy was expended on the new venture, and the target set, of '50 souls a quarter', was several times exceeded. The 1850s were in fact far more prosperous for the Primitives than the preceding two decades had been⁽¹⁶⁾, and even though the Birkenhead circuit was separated from it in 1857, Liverpool showed over the whole decade an increase of over 100 members, the figure in 1860 standing at 540. At this time moreover one of the most distinguished of early Primitive leaders, the Rev. James Garner, was superintendent minister, and it was largely due to his initiative that in 1860 two new chapels were opened, Jubilee, Yates Street, at the south end of the town, and Pentecost, Croston Street (otherwise Boundary Street East) at the north end⁽¹⁷⁾. The total cost of these new ventures - £2500 - placed a great financial burden on the impecunious Primitives who for many years were unable to clear the debts on the two buildings.

Hardly had the project of 1860 been completed however than the circuit suddenly found itself in possession of four more chapels, the gift of Mr George Pennell, to whose evangelistic activities we have already alluded. The Pennell chapels, all situated in extremely poor areas, Great Richmond, Kilshaw, Benledi and Beau Streets, showed less enthusiasm for their new affiliation than Pennell himself - all but one in fact objected most strongly to their founder's action, and Beau Street fell away altogether. Gradually however harmony was restored to the other three, and so powerful was their evangelistic zeal that even after their year of troubles, they could report in 1864 an increase of 37 members⁽¹⁸⁾.

As soon as they had discovered in the Primitives congenial allies, the working men of Pennell's Missions embarked once again on an intensive programme of missionary work, concentrating especially on Roman Catholic areas. One of them, Samuel Eccles, lost all his teeth in the course of such evangelism, and was kicked from one end of Tatlock Street to the other. Some solid progress was however recorded, and within a short time a new cause had been added to the original three, the church in Northumberland Terrace, erected in 1865, a large building with a day and Sunday School attached, paid for largely by the other Primitive Methodist churches of the town⁽¹⁹⁾.

The accession of strength contributed in 1863 to the local circuit by the Pennell missions necessitated a reorganization of the whole

structure of Primitive Methodism in Liverpool, and accordingly the same year the churches were regrouped into three circuits, Rathbone and Yates Street forming the first or southern, Maguire Street and Boundary Street East the second or northern, and the Pennell missions the third or central. Each circuit was allotted two ministers, and their respective memberships stood at 266, 344 and 200⁽²⁰⁾. The new arrangement acted as a fillip to all the older churches: in the first circuit Boundary Street East in the 1860s became famous in the Connexion as the church which, largely on its own initiative, sent out its society steward, James Hands, a carpenter by trade, to Fernando Po, as the first Primitive Methodist missionary overseas⁽²¹⁾. The second circuit saw to the erection of another chapel in the south end of the town, Palmerston Street (1870), while both united to give the struggling third circuit a suitable head church in Village Street, Everton, erected in 1873.

Encouraged by their successful progress the Primitives in 1875 embarked upon a yet more ambitious project, the erection of a great church in the south end of the town, in the rising suburb of Princes Park, which would act as a nucleus for connexional work throughout the town. Accordingly a large parcel of ground was purchased from the Earl of Sefton the same year, and after numerous delays the foundation stone of Princes Avenue church was laid by the Mayor of Liverpool in October 1877⁽²²⁾. The scheme was the most disastrous upon which the Primitives could have embarked. Not only could they not afford such a project (the Avenue was not completed till 1886); in addition they brought down upon themselves the mockery and scorn of the town whose press criticised the 'revolting ugliness' of the site, lamented that 'such a small and uninfluential body should ever have embarked on such a scheme', especially in an area 'where the people to whom they are suited does not live'⁽²³⁾. What was even more tragic however was that the new church caused dissension among the Primitives themselves, many of whom objected to the magnificence of the layout, the 'sweet reasonableness' and lack of fervour in the devotions, and the 'broad' and 'worldly' atmosphere which prevailed there⁽²⁴⁾. Though the Avenue was to attract some of the best preachers in the denomination (and it had at once been given a minister of its own), it was always looked upon with deep distrust by its fellow churches.

Princes Avenue, because of its southerly situation, naturally became a member church of the first circuit. Meanwhile the second circuit, not to be outdone, had embarked in the 1880s on a vigorous building scheme on its own account. A new church costing £2600 was erected in Bootle in 1883⁽²⁵⁾ to be followed by a smaller mission chapel in Walton, erected in 1886⁽²⁶⁾. Boundary Street East was completely rebuilt in 1888⁽²⁷⁾, while a church hall was built at Aintree in 1892⁽²⁸⁾. Yet this extensive building programme conceals some rather disturbing indications of serious spiritual malaise within the circuit: the new churches for example were paid for largely by W.P. Hartley, the jam manufacturer and philanthropist, rather than by the circuit members themselves, Boundary Street East was by this time far from flourishing, Maguire Street was closed in 1883, and a new cause planted at Waterloo had failed from the very start, and was now rented out to the Salvation Army.

Yet the serious decline in the total membership of the three circuits, from 918 in 1880 to 866 in 1890 and to 732 in 1895 is to be explained largely by the hopeless decay of the the third circuit which, entirely working-class in composition, was peculiarly exposed to those adverse economic conditions which affected Primitive Methodist support so seriously in most urban centres. By the late 1880s, despite the eloquent preaching of the Rev. J. Jackson, Village Street Chapel was scandalously empty⁽²⁹⁾; shortly afterwards the three remaining Pennell missions, Benledi, Gilead and Kilshaw Streets, collapsed and though a new church was erected in Jubilee Drive, Kensington, to replace them, it was overwhelmed by its uncomfortable proximity to the flourishing Baptist chapel in the same street.

The denominational journals were thus in the mid-90s full of references to Liverpool as the Primitives' problem city where progress, never very substantial, had now come completely to a halt. Various suggestions were made, the most interesting and probably most relevant being that Mr Hartley be induced to donate a Central Hall to rival the success of the Wesleyans⁽³⁰⁾. The idea was not followed up.

With the more favourable economic circumstances of the later 1890s and the deepening conviction that the denomination in Liverpool was facing an unparalleled crisis in its history, the Primitives in 1896 embarked on a new phase of evangelistic endeavour and generated a

spiritual impetus which persisted with scarcely diminished fervour to the outbreak of the First World War. By 1898 the churches in Queens Road, Bootle, and Longmoor Lane, Aintree, had grown sufficiently for them to be constituted circuits in their own right: they became the fourth and fifth respectively. The following year the inadequate premises in Walton were replaced by a new chapel in Church Road West, Mr Hartley donating half of the total cost of £3000⁽³¹⁾, and after years of patient effort a chapel to seat 360 was erected in Hilberry Avenue, Tuebrook. Even the cause in Albert Road, Waterloo was re-suscitated, and soon became a principal church of the second circuit. Total membership of the three circuits in 1900 stood at the record figure of 1048, a larger number than that returned by the United Methodist Free Churches, though the Primitives' actual attendances were slightly smaller. When in 1913 the Rev. T.A. Guttery, the greatest orator in the denomination, if not in the whole of Nonconformity, began a seven year ministry at Princes Avenue, it was a token of the respect which the Avenue and the Liverpool circuits generally now commanded in the Connexion.

The Primitives however belong to the byepaths rather than to the mainstream of Liverpool Nonconformist history. Due to the absence of contemporary references and reports, their story has been extremely difficult to trace: like many lesser sects they appear deliberately to have shunned the limelight, and to have been suspicious of public recognition. It is hard to point to a single lay leader whom they produced, and their complete quietism in political matters contrasts strongly with their contribution to radical politics in other towns. It was often observed that till the late nineteenth century they recruited principally from immigrants coming into Liverpool from the countryside⁽³²⁾, and such a constituency was unable to foster the qualities of initiative and enterprise which made the Wesleyans' lay leadership so singularly fruitful. Hence, at the very time when the circuit system was proving its worth in the parent church, it was failing miserably among the Primitives who were constantly complaining of the non-success of 'itinerancy'. The fact that by 1914 the leading churches in Liverpool all had their own resident ministers and were practically congregational in polity is eloquent of the failure of a denomination which prided itself too much on its lack of middle-class elements and on the all-

embracing competence of its wholly proletarian membership.

(C) Free Methodism (1834-1914).

The Wesleyan Methodist Association whose stormy beginnings have been recorded in a previous chapter had by the end of 1835 emerged as a denomination in its own right. Commanding an adherence of about a thousand, its leaders such as David Rowland, C.E. Rawlins and J.A. Picton, were predominantly young, middle-class men, fiercely radical in religion and politics alike⁽³³⁾. From their headquarters in the Music Hall, Bold Street, the new Association at once drew up a grandiose scheme of church building to accommodate both their existing supporters and the converts they still hoped to make from Wesleyansm and elsewhere. One by one new (and of course debt-ridden) chapels were erected on carefully chosen sites, usually in new areas of working-class penetration and on the periphery of the town - Herculaneum chapel, a small building which seated only 250, they had already acquired: to this were added in the next few years Bispham Street, seating 600 and erected in 1836 at a cost of £650, and Pleasant Street, built in 1839 at a cost of £5500 from an original design by Picton himself, a large chapel which held 1390 and was intended to serve as the principal church of the denomination (the Music Hall was returned to secular uses the same year). Heath Street, Toxteth Park, costing £700 and with seating for 600, was erected in 1840, Scotland Road which accommodated 400 was built in 1843 at a cost of £1400, while two other chapels were completed at the same time in Prescot and Birkenhead and the Herculaneum premises were replaced by new buildings in 1846⁽³⁴⁾. The denomination moreover paid particular attention to Day and Sunday Schools: a junior school was attached to each of the chapels, and Pleasant Street had in addition a department for senior girls. Over 350 day scholars were on the books of the W.M.A. by 1840, together with nearly 2000 Sunday scholars who not merely attended the schools attached to the five chapels, but six others established in various parts of the town. Without doubt, the lay leaders were determined to plant the foundations of their new denomination as securely as their material and spiritual resources permitted⁽³⁵⁾.

Yet as early as 1839 the fortunes of the Association in Liverpool had begun to go awry. In 1836 in the full flush of their evangelistic zeal, they had persuaded two of their company, William Sanderson and

John Watson, to become full-time evangelists and assistants to the two ministers who had been stationed on the Liverpool circuit the same year. Sanderson and Watson had been unwearied in their missionary labours in the poor streets of the town and the surrounding villages, but within three years their efforts had been so sabotaged by the lay leaders who could not decide whether to employ these evangelists 'of holy zeal and energy' or replace them by 'men of polish', that both resigned in disgust⁽³⁶⁾. Meanwhile as several of the original supporters became disillusioned with the new order of things, and rejoined the Wesleyans⁽³⁷⁾, membership of the Liverpool circuit began to fall severely, from 1466 in 1837 to 1063 in 1841 and to 868 in 1845. A further blow was suffered when in 1839 Rawlins became a Unitarian, and Picton, astonished that 'the grand liberal talk of 1834 had ended in humdrum sectarianism', and conscious that 'vulgarity, ignorance, narrow-mindedness and cant' were becoming the characteristics of the new denomination⁽³⁸⁾ gravitated at the same time towards the Baptists, and later joined a Congregational church. Undoubtedly however the most turbulent factor in the affairs of the local denomination was the conduct of Mr David Rowland.

From the very first Liverpool men had played a leading role in successive W.M.A. Conferences, and on the connexional committees, and Rowland had not merely been President of the Association in 1840, when its foundation deed was drawn up and legalized, but became corresponding secretary of the Connexion a year later. Already however he was a man with a grievance, for in 1836 he had been rejected as a candidate for the W.M.A. ministry, and for this and other insults he blamed his great rival, the Rev. Robert Eckett, whom he accused, not without justification, of fostering a type of clericalism as bad as that from which the Association had just escaped. A very tense atmosphere pervaded the 1840 Assembly held in Manchester when Rowland was president and Eckett secretary, and it was clear that at any moment their mutual dislike might erupt, with terrible consequences to the denomination⁽³⁹⁾.

The first fifteen years of the new Association had thus seen a powerful body of reformers for whom the future appeared firmly in their grasp degenerate into a strife-torn sect, but in this process Liverpool clearly resembles Manchester and other towns where a similar process

is discernible. In the middle years of the century however occurred a series of happenings which having at first threatened to destroy the local churches altogether, subsequently shaped their history in a radically different pattern from that followed elsewhere. In this David Rowland is again the key figure, and the Wesleyan Reform movement the setting for this last phase of his destructive work.

By March 1851 three factors concerning the Wesleyan Reformers in Liverpool, whose origins we have also had occasion to study in our previous chapter, had become clear to all those concerned in these unhappy events. Firstly there was now no possibility of reconciliation with the parent body - the efforts of the Birmingham 'Mediationists' to effect the same evoked little response in Liverpool where the appointment of the Rev. S. Meldrum as minister to the Reform circuit signaled the completeness of the rupture. Secondly the Reform movement was now hopelessly on the wane, for though over 100 had been expelled or resigned from the Wesleyan body, no more than 200 could be assembled for the great Reform rallies held in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, or the Royal Assembly Rooms, Great George Street⁽⁴⁰⁾. Most supporters seem in fact to have lapsed altogether, and were not heard of again in any church connection, though William Byrom, one of the original leaders had rather inconsistently become an Anglican and a Tory. Thirdly, it was now apparent that Mr David Rowland's lionizing the Reformers, and loaning out the W.M.A.'s chapels to this latest body of malcontents was not entirely a disingenuous gesture of sympathy with their aims. Quite obviously Rowland was bent on using the Reform agitation to deal a crushing blow to the ambitions of his arch-enemy Eckett who disliked the Reform leaders and had openly criticised them.

His opportunity came in the spring of 1852. By this time the W.M.A. in Liverpool, though still retaining its five chapels, was barely holding its own, and membership was down to about 700. The Reformers meanwhile, under the guidance of their new minister, the Rev. H. Hirst (1852-54) had taken two preaching rooms, in St. Anne's Street and Bedford Street, neither of which accommodated more than 150, but which seemed to satisfy the needs of the denomination adequately enough. Into this precariously balanced situation stepped Mr Rowland, dragging behind him the rather pathetic figure of the Rev. James Carveth, chairman of the Liverpool W.M.A. circuit whom he had decided to use as his principal

weapon in a last gigantic effort to discomfort Eckett. Carveth was easily persuaded to 'calumniate' Eckett and the proceedings of the connexional Assembly, and was in August 1852 summoned before the Associationist hierarchy to answer for his conduct. Carveth, backed by Rowland, had however his trump card still to play: in so ultra-democratic body as the Association, where did authority lie, the Assembly, or in the circuit? Clamour ensued as this nice point was debated, but whatever the result of this 'question by penalty' case as it became known the decision had already been anticipated by the Liverpool circuit, which on 4th August 1852 formally renounced its connection with the Assembly and recalled its representatives⁽⁴¹⁾. Rowland's triumph was now complete: at a formal ceremony the Association chapels were handed over to the Wesleyan Reformers, and the Assembly was invited to do its worst. The 'United Wesleyan Reform and Ex-Association Circuit', to give it its cumbersome title, was not, as its vicious origins would indicate, either a prosperous or an harmonious body. Not all the Liverpool Associationists trusted in the rightness of Rowland's action, and those who knew him well withdrew to an old chapel in Russell Street which they purchased, and where, though numbering less than 100, they defied the sponsors of the new arrangement and proclaimed their loyalty to the Association.

Even at the time discerning people observed that it was the best and most spiritual members of the Association who were finding their way to the beleaguered garrison in Russell Street and who were now embarking on the deliberate design of recapturing the lost chapels from the Reformers who, they rightly believed, had neither the energy nor the desire to keep them open. In this way Heath Street and Scotch Road where the trustees had in each case given notice of sale were recovered early in 1853, and the membership of the official W.M.A. circuit rose to 257. Herculaneum and Pleasant Street however, where the Reformers had more firmly entrenched themselves, could not be detached, and Bispham Street was sold soon afterwards. Led by three notable laymen, Robert Thorpe, George Quail and Richard Lloyd, the Associationists after a great financial effort secured the services of two excellent ministers,

the Revs. T.A. Bayley and S.S. Barton who began at once to salvage what they could in the way of property and of members⁽⁴²⁾.

Meanwhile the Wesleyan Reformers having tried to sell three of the five chapels which had unexpectedly come their way, proved themselves incapable of supporting the other two, or of evoking any sort of spiritual loyalty at all from their adherents. Individually or in groups the Reformers began to drift back to the Associationists: Their third minister, the Rev. W. Wood (1855-6) was not replaced as the Reformers could no longer support even one settled pastor. Pleasant Street had by this time failed completely and had been sold to the Church of England, an event which caused a certain amount of grim satisfaction to the Liverpool Wesleyans who had often predicted that this sort of fate would befall the successive waves of lay rebellion. Herculaneum chapel reverted to the Association in 1856, and the Reformers were thus left with only their two preaching rooms, together with Hope Hall which they used for occasional services and which seemed to suit their semi-political vapourings better than any church. This year of course marks the union at a national level of the W.M.A. with most circuits of the Wesleyan Reformers, and the creation of a new denomination, the United Methodist Free Churches. There was however no formal union in Liverpool: small groups of Reformers had been transferring their allegiance for several years past and were to continue to do so for several more. The two preaching rooms kept up an independent and pathetic existence till 1860 in which year they died out altogether, and Wesleyan Reform disappeared from Liverpool without trace.

The U.M.F.C. in the late 50s and early 60s were faced with appalling difficulties, arising largely from the debts accumulated during the battle for the recovery of their chapels in 1853. Only one minister could be supported, and with great reluctance Heath Street chapel had to be sold when the mortgage on Scotland Road was foreclosed in 1858. But the bitter experiences of these years had taught the Free Methodists that liberal principles without evangelical concern would lead to the extinction of their denomination - hence from their chapels in Russell Street, Scotland Road, and Herculaneum, they began an intensive campaign of tract-distribution and open air work, and succeeded in establishing mission stations in Wavertree, West Derby Road, and in neighbouring areas, such as Birkenhead, Claughton, St. Helens and Whiston⁽⁴³⁾.

Slowly the situation improved, and the year 1867 marks a real turning point in the fortunes of the denomination. The Rev. W.R. Sunman was U.M.F.C. minister in Liverpool from 1867 to 1870. At once this remarkable man drew up a most extensive scheme of church building and evangelistic effort which he and his successor, the Rev. S. Macfarlane (1870-73) had the satisfaction of bringing to completion. £10,000 was the expenditure originally envisaged, £44,000 was in fact spent. One by one, following successful evangelistic campaigns, the new chapels arose: Empire Street, West Derby Road (300 seats) in 1869, Hamilton Road, with seating for 430 rented from a local builder, Mr R.R. Roberts in 1870, and handed over gratis to the denomination in 1878, Wellington Road (700 seats) in the south end of the town, opened in 1871 amid scenes of great revivalist enthusiasm by a Wesleyan minister (the animosities of earlier days had by this time been largely forgotten)⁽⁴⁴⁾, Grove Street, built, perhaps with the deliberate intention of rivalling the fashionable Wesleyan church further down the road, in 1872 at a cost of £6500, and with seating for 900⁽⁴⁵⁾. Meanwhile Scotland Road church had been enlarged to accommodate 600 persons, and the old chapel in Russell Street completely renovated and freed from debt. Once again these developments in Liverpool are singular in the history of the Free Methodists for whom the early 70s witnessed in most areas a serious decline in chapel building and sharp falls in membership.

The astonishing revival of this period necessitated by 1875 a division in the Liverpool circuit, and in the same year Grove Street, Russell Street and a little mission in Dunning Road were constituted the central, Scotland Road, Hamilton Road and mission stations in Netherfield Road, Stuart Road and Bostock Street the northern, and Wellington Road with a branch in Mersey View Road, Garston, the southern circuits⁽⁴⁶⁾. Each group of churches had two ministers.

The next task which faced the denomination was the replacement of its unsatisfactory mission premises with more permanent school-chapels, and this process marks the second and concluding phase of the revival period. Russell Road, Garston, a very small chapel, holding only 200, was erected in 1876, and Netherfield Hall chapel, a building of similar design and size, in 1878. The previous year Durning Road (otherwise

Holt Road) chapel had been opened: this building absorbed a small mission in Juno Street and had seating for 350. A similar scheme for Bostock Street mission was not however realized, and that in Stuart Road was only replaced by a school-chapel in 1890.

By this date it was clear that the halcyon days were over. The combined membership of the circuits had grown from 572 in 1868 to 841 in 1895, and rose slowly to 989 by the time of union with the M.N.C. in 1907. But in the Edwardian era attendances, as was so often the case, fell off as nominal membership increased, and though a new church was built in Stuart Road in 1904, the money was raised only with extreme difficulty, while the building of Lawrence Road in 1903 had been made possible only by the closure and sale of the historic chapel in Russell Street. Thereafter the denominational situation remained static to the end of our period.

Inevitably a group of churches of comparable number and equivalent membership to the Primitive Methodists suggests comparison with the latter body, but in truth the two organizations were dissimilar in very many ways. The Primitives for example were by now far more adventurous in the outlying suburbs of the city: a glance at a map shows the U.M.F.C. churches huddled closely together in the centre, with Stuart Road and Russell Road as far-flung outposts in the north and south respectively. Moreover the Free Methodists certainly display none of the working-class solidarity of the Primitives. One entirely proletarian congregation they had - Scotland Road - and this was regarded as a kind of display piece to impress other denominations⁽⁴⁷⁾. Otherwise the social composition of their chapels was little different from that of the ^{other} democratic Nonconformist denomination, the Baptists, whom they in many ways resemble⁽⁴⁸⁾ - Grove Street in fact was positively genteel. And here again a final difference presents itself, for in contrast to the obscurity⁽⁴⁹⁾ and facelessness of the Primitives, the leading Free Methodist families of the later nineteenth century (all of them very closely interrelated by marriage) were by any standards a remarkably vigorous, colourful and intellectually alert company. A knot of industrial and commercial families, the Holts (metal factors), McTaggarts (drapers), Quilliams (watchmakers), Looneys (printers) looked up to three outstanding men as the lay leaders of their denomination - Richard Lloyd, the last holder of the hereditary office of port-guager of Liverpool, whose son-in-law, the Rev. Silas

Hocking, established his reputation as a voluminous writer of adventure stories while serving as a U.M.F.C. minister in the city, Dr Burrows, the ultra-radical veteran of 1848 whose house was the meeting place of the Italian political exiles residing in Liverpool⁽⁵⁰⁾, above all Thomas Snape, ex-Anglican ordinand turned alkali-manufacturer, author of two works, 'The Growth of Democratic Power' and 'The Poetry of Swⁿburne', U.M.F.C. local preacher, President of the Liverpool Peace Society (a body largely supported by his co-religionists), known in many countries as a powerful advocate of international arbitration and radical Liberal M.P. for Heywood from 1892-95⁽⁵¹⁾. These men and others like them certainly added lustre and distinction not merely to the church in Grove Street but to the whole denomination whose interests they loyally and eloquently served.

(D) The Independent Methodists (1839-1914)

A schism within a schism is no unusual phenomenon in Nonconformity, and it was to such a process that the Independent Methodists churches of Liverpool owed their origin. William Sanderson had, as we have seen, resigned from the W.M.A. on some technical irregularity in 1839. He and some friends at once opened a tiny 'Free Gospel Tabernacle' in Great Charlotte Street the same year. They were apparently unaware that there were other groups of Methodists who while Wesleyan in doctrine, preferred an Independent polity and, like them, had had occasion to rue the existence of a 'hired' (i.e. paid, full-time) ministry. Learning however that such a connexion of Independent Methodist churches did exist, they made haste to join the same in 1841, retaining for themselves the title 'Free Gospel Churches' till as late as 1899. A new and larger tabernacle was built in Elizabeth Street in 1845, and this building which was enlarged and altered several times remained the principal church of the denomination in Liverpool till the end of our period. It was also the place of worship of the three leading 'ministers' in Liverpool, William Sanderson himself, William Boote and Jasper Isterling.

Elizabeth Street was supported almost entirely by the workingclass, and with great evangelistic eagerness similar missions were established in Prescot, Maghull, Little Neston, and elsewhere. Though these lasted in most cases only a few years, more permanent results were achieved in Liverpool itself. In 1859 for example Mr Daniel Heath built a

£240 mission room in Tetlow Street, which, as congregations grew, went through the same complicated process of rebuildings and structural alterations as the parent church. (The Independent Methodists, many of whom were building workers, usually constructed their own buildings, a sign of the rugged independence they cherished so dearly). Goodison Road was similarly missioned by Tetlow Street in 1898, and a small building, known as 'North Zion' erected at a cost of £900 the same year. This too became an independent church in 1901. By the turn of the century however the energies of even this most evangelistically-minded body were beginning to fail, and combined morning and evening attendances which in 1902 had totalled 585 had declined to 454 ten years later. Though a fifth mission church was erected in a poor part of Crosby in 1914 at a cost of £460, the history of the Independents provides no exception to the general impression of spiritual decay which infected all the Methodist sects in the opening years of the present century⁽⁵²⁾.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DISSENTING UNDERGROWTH

To combine in a single chapter the histories of a number of dissident religious groups for no other reason than that they can not logically be accommodated elsewhere may appear a dubious procedure, especially since by no means all of those treated below diverged very far from the Christian norms. The orthodoxy of the Free Church of England and the Churches of Christ is unimpeachable, that of the Quakers and the Brethren only slightly more suspect: these four bodies at least make uneasy bedfellows with the more heterodox forms which popular Protestantism often assumed in the nineteenth century. Nor moreover are they all religions of the dispossessed, though for the most part they originated at times of rapid social change. Again, they are not linked in any way chronologically, for they emerged at irregular intervals throughout the entire period under review. Finally they have no point of similarity in their relationship to other denominations. For the Church of England for example Irvingites and Swedenborgians had a respect sometimes approaching reverence, but others like the Quakers were indifferent, and yet others, like the Christadelphians, hostile. Ecclesiologically however they display many features in common, for they all, upon close examination, appear as expressions of sect-rather than of church - type Christianity, even though this designation would be repudiated by most of them, particularly by the Disciples who arose in the laudable desire to unite all Christian churches on the soundest of ecumenical principles.

(A) Quakers, Mystics and Millenarians

The only small sect which possessed a Liverpool meeting house in 1786 was the Society of Friends who had already a long tradition of hardships and sufferings behind them. Quaintly anachronistic, yet unusually enlightened for their age, withdrawn and introspective, yet possessed of a vigorous social conscience, these pious folk numbered in their ranks several enterprising families of wealth and distinction. The Rathbones for example were by now firmly established in local society, their humble origins in a remote part of Cheshire now no more than a lingering memory. William Rathbone III and his son, the fourth to bear the family patronymic, were prosperous merchants, and had two years previously imported into Liverpool the first bale of American-grown cotton⁽¹⁾. In view of their

enterprise it was probably no accident that the first recorded cottonbroker in the town was also a Friend, Nicholas Waterhouse, who had recently made his way here from Manchester⁽²⁾. The Hadwen brothers of Edgehill were members of another influential family, Joseph being in trade as a grocer, Isaac as a banker, Thomas as a silversmith. Richard Hillary, William Hasleden and William Fawcett were all Quaker merchants, though the last-named was to be expelled in 1794 for making and vending weapons of war⁽³⁾.

Finally there were the families of Binns, Rutter and Cropper. Abraham and his two sons, George and Thomas, Binns were all leather-cutters, and thus represent the continuing craft tradition among the Liverpool Friends. But they were also of a pronounced literary turn of mind, and Thomas, besides becoming later on chairman of the Liverpool Underwriters Association and treasurer of the Liverpool Infirmary was one of the town's first antiquarians whose library without doubt formed the nucleus of the present Liverpool Local History Collection⁽⁴⁾. The Rutter family who were originally chandlers hailed like the Rathbones from rural Cheshire, though they had arrived in Liverpool much later. John Rutter in 1786 however was just completing his medical training at the University of Edinburgh, and, returning to his native town in 1788, soon became distinguished as a local practitioner, physician to the Liverpool Dispensary in 1792, President of the Liverpool Library in 1790 in succession to William Roscoe, and the principal supporter both of the Athenaeum (founded in 1799) and of the Liverpool Medical Institution, which he promoted in 1837⁽⁵⁾. Lastly, but not yet overshadowing in importance his fellow Quakers, was the solemn rubicund figure of young James Cropper who had left the family farm at Winstanley, Lancs, to be apprenticed to the Rathbone Brothers⁽⁶⁾ but who was soon to set up on his own account the first line of packets sailing between England and America with both mail and passengers⁽⁷⁾.

Perhaps it was the consciousness of their mounting prosperity which inspired the Liverpool Friends in 1791 to abandon their old Meeting House in Hackins Hey in favour of a new building in Hunter Street, a plain, sturdy edifice (it survived substantially unchanged till hit by a bomb in 1941), with a graveyard attached.

From their new meeting house the Quakers wielded considerable influence over the politics and social life of the town. As philanthropists they

were already active: in the difficult days of the French wars the old Hackins Hey building was turned by Peneolope Rathbone and other Quaker ladies into a soup Kitchen for the starving poor⁽⁸⁾, while as late as 1820 prison visiting and prison relief in Liverpool were almost entirely entrusted to the Quaker community⁽⁹⁾.

In popular education too they were in the field before any other denomination. Penelope Rathbone had been conducting a school for poor girls in Soho Street as early as 1790, removing a few years later to the abandoned chapel in Hackins Hey. This work was transferred in 1817 to Duncan Street East, where infants and boys were also admitted⁽¹⁰⁾. This 'Friends' Free School' lasted till the time of the Forster Education Act of 1870, by which date the Society was conducting another establishment in Islington on the Pestalozzi principle⁽¹¹⁾. Though as early as the 1820s the Quaker contribution to education was being overshadowed by that of Unitarians, Wesleyans and Congregationalists, their pioneering efforts provided a powerful stimulus to their fellow Nonconformists.

Persons with such social interests were bound to constitute a force in politics, and the squibs of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods contain several references (usually hostile) to their attitudes and activities. 'The Quakers' inward light burns with fierceness', a Tory pamphlet declared a propos their role in the bitter election of 1806⁽¹²⁾, while as late as 1832 their allegedly smug, worldly-wide pacifism was made the basis of another spirited Tory attack⁽¹³⁾. By this time of course the Quakers were wholly identified in the popular mind with the anti-slavery crusade, in which once again they had been in Liverpool the sturdy and unflinching pioneers. Only two Liverpool names appear among the abolitionists of 1787, those of William Rathbone IV and Dr. Johnathan Binns. Both were to suffer for their advocacy of a cause which in Liverpool was tantamount to treason, Rathbone by a virtual boycott from all the leading citizens of the town, Binns by being literally driven out of house and home (he became superintendent of Ackworth School in 1800). The Quakers however did not waver in their determination, and by the time the trade was abandoned in 1807, James Cropper had emerged as the leading abolitionist in the town. Later in 1823 he was to have the singular distinction of reviving the agitation against slavery not merely in Liverpool but throughout the country also⁽¹⁴⁾.

It was thus most unfortunate that by the time of the Abolitionists' eventual triumph in 1833 the Quaker community of Liverpool should have been for many years suffering numerical losses which were gradually reducing its status to that of a backwater in the religious life of the town. Whatever the explanation, by the 1820s and 30s Liverpool contained a very large number of lapsed Quakers who had transferred their moral earnestness to some other denomination. The Rathbones led the way, William IV, son of the third to bear the family patronymic and of Rachel Rutter, began by merely dissenting from the Friends' intransigence over 'mixed' marriages and the payment of tithes; from this he passed on to an overt Latitudinarianism, and in 1792 joined the London Unitarian Book Society, for which he was rebuked in print by Job Scott, an Irish Friend. There followed the troubles among the Irish brethren known as the Barnard schism, and when William Rathbone in 1804 published his 'Narrative of Events In Ireland Among the Quakers', there could be no doubt that his own sympathies lay with the liberal section. He was disowned by the Hardshaw Monthly meeting in February 1805, and though never actually becoming a Unitarian he thereafter attended Benns Garden chapel till his death in 1809⁽¹⁵⁾. His son, William V, remained a Friend longer than his father, but was likewise expelled in 1812 for marrying Elizabeth Gregg, a Unitarian, and though subsequently reinstated, had withdrawn again by 1822. Similar tendencies are observable in other families. When James Cropper removed from Liverpool to his native Fearnhead to establish his famous Agricultural School in 1834, this not only weakened the Liverpool Quakers still further, but was the signal for his earnestly evangelical son John to leave them for the Baptists. The Crosfield family who had come to Liverpool from Warrington in 1827 departed about the same time for the Independents, and Isaac B. Cooke, the cottonbroker, for the Unitarians. Two of the staunchest evangelical Anglicans of the period, J.R. Thompson, the promotor of Sunday Schools and Mission Halls⁽¹⁶⁾, and David Hodgson, the outspoken Tory councillor of the 1830s and 40s were likewise formerly Friends. Clearly this distinctive religious tradition was in the process of rapid decay.

Yet though reduced in numbers and influence the Quakers continued to worship and to do their good works as regularly and unobtrusively as ever. The remaining members, having at last disposed of the Hackins

Hey property in 1856, used the money to build a second Liverpool Meeting House in Smithdown Road for the benefit of Friends residing in the south end of the town. The more evangelistically-minded of them even joined in the mission-hall enthusiasm of the 80s and 90s, conducting for a short time Quaker Mission and Cocoa Rooms in Bittern Street and Richmond Row. But by now they had no effective leadership - only Mr Thomas Cropper Ryley, the poor man's solicitor, educationalist, secretary of the Islington School and founder of the Friends' Institute, a public lending library which he conducted from the same building for the benefit of working-class residents in that area, commanded anything like the public esteem which had once attached to the Binns, Croppers, Rutters and Rathbones⁽¹⁷⁾. When he died in 1908, the Quakers' last representative in public life passed from the local scene⁽¹⁸⁾. In Liverpool, as in the country at large, the Quakers seem to have been one of the very few old-established denominations to have lost ground in the nineteenth century, just as they are the only one to have progressed, albeit slowly, in the twentieth.

The secession of the Rathbones indicates that somehow the Friends with their inbred quietism had failed to respond to the mood of quasi-political chiliasm which historians are beginning to recognize as an important phase in the thinking of the urban populations of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods⁽¹⁹⁾. But this vacuum was in Liverpool not left entirely unfilled, for here the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg were most active at the very time the Quaker tradition was in process of fragmentation.

The Swedenborgians, the earliest of the modern sects which supplemented the Scriptures eschatologically with a private revelation of their own, first made their appearance in Liverpool in the 1770s in the house of one Richard Haughton of Wolstenholme Square, a leading merchant, an Anglican and a prominent convert to the teachings of the New Church. It was he who in 1772 elicited from the great John Wesley the latter's strange confession of his indebtedness to Swedenborg's teachings, but otherwise he had little success, for in Liverpool, unlike Manchester, no local Anglican clergyman embraced the new doctrines, and the Swedenborgians in consequence were treated with suspicion and hostility⁽²⁰⁾. About 1786 however there arrived in Liverpool Mr Joseph Salmon⁽²¹⁾, an

ex-Wesleyan, and the Eccentric Ralph Mather, a former Quaker who called himself a priest, and wore sacerdotal robes. These two preached Swedenborgianism in the open air with characteristically Methodist fervour, proclaiming their religion in fact to be 'Methodism spiritually reformed', a style which annoyed the Wolstenholme Square set who remained loyal Anglicans and hoped vainly to infuse their new beliefs into that communion, without the need for any form of separate organization. This division of principles greatly weakened the infant New Church in Liverpool, and it was with difficulty that they at last acquired a room in Hackins Hey in 1790, moving to the vacated Presbyterian chapel in Kay Street a year later. Here the Revs. Ralph Mather, William Hill and Jacob Douche ministered in succession for five years until in 1795 a Mr Mayers built for the sect a new chapel in Maguire Street, which unfortunately the Swedenborgians were never to occupy as he went bankrupt before the building was completed⁽²²⁾.

For the next fifty years the movements of the Liverpool Swedenborgians who sometimes had a settled minister but were usually dependent on the stronger church in Chester, are very obscure. From 1795 to 1810 they met in a room in Marble Street, then worshipped in a private house, occupied Cockspur Street chapel from 1815 to 1823, disappear altogether for the next five years, and re-emerge again in Russell Street Chapel in 1838. Here they were for a time more successful, but diminishing numbers led to the sale of that building to the W.M.A. in 1852. Four years later the Swedenborgians built for themselves a little church in Bedford Street in which they remained for the rest of the period under review⁽²³⁾. They never numbered more than about a hundred, and after the turn of the century their support fell off rapidly. Only 33 persons are recorded as present for worship at Bedford Street in 1912 compared with 81 thirty years previously⁽²⁴⁾.

Hardly had Liverpool recovered from one bout of millenarianism when another more extravagant form made its more than fleeting appearance in the town. Joanna Southcott, like Swedenborg, secured here an earnest disciple in the person of a local businessman, Mr Peter Morrison, who was influenced to embrace Southcottianism through his contacts with the eccentric Richard Brothers⁽²⁵⁾ in 1800. Morrison, himself a visionary like Joanna, became one of the latter's principal supporters, and financed many of her building projects, but no chapel was apparently ever

built in Liverpool itself. On Morrison's death the Liverpool Southcottians came under the spell of the eccentric 'Judaizer' John Wroe who visited the town in 1823, circumcized his supporters and changed their title to Christian Israelites, under which name they appear in the Religious Census of 1851. Their shadowy existence continued till the 1870s when they came under the influence of 'Jezreel', author of the 'Flying Roll', and builder of the famous Gillingham Tower. The sect was still extant in Liverpool in 1885 when Jezreel died and his wife 'Esther' was accepted as 'Seventh Trumpeter'. Great plans were afoot to build chapels all over the country including one in Liverpool, but they came apparently to nothing, for none was ever constructed there, and henceforth no further reference to Joanna's followers occurs in the local records. This outrageous sect had all along attracted remarkably little notice, their demise like their birth passing virtually without mention.

(B) New Forms of Primitivism

The 1830s, a decade of unparalleled political and social upheaval, were like the Napoleonic period productive of an outcrop of new sects; the Plymouth Brethren, the Irvingites and the Disciples all representing in widely different ways an urge to recover the foundation deeds of apostolic Christianity, the Mormons bent on a like quest, though interpreting it like the Swedenborgians in the light of a freshly spoken revelation from the Divine.

The first Mormon missionaries to Britain arrived in Liverpool on July 20th 1837, though no attempt was apparently made to 'mission' the town itself, the Saints moving on quickly to Preston which soon became their northern stronghold. Liverpool was not in fact evangelised till January 1840 when John Taylor who had married a Liverpool lady by the name of Leonora Cannon made an onslaught upon Mr Timothy Matthews' Hope Street congregation which was already predisposed in the direction of Mormonism. The Cannons, a Methodist family, were his first converts, and George Q. Cannon was later ordained an apostle by Brigham Young at Salt Lake City in 1860⁽²⁶⁾. March 1840 saw the first Mormon baptisms

in Liverpool, and by the following month when Brigham Young himself arrived in the town, there were thirty Liverpool converts⁽²⁷⁾, a number which had risen to seventy by the end of the year. The first meeting place was apparently the Music Hall, Bold Street - a larger room in Preston Street was taken in 1841.

During the next year or two however it became clear that Liverpool did not contain in large numbers the type of persons who were attracted to the Mormon faith elsewhere⁽²⁸⁾. Thus, though from 1841 onwards the publishing office of the Millennial Star was located here, and from 1843 onwards the administrative headquarters of the whole European Mission⁽²⁹⁾ and although it was through Liverpool that nearly all the Saints passed on their westward pilgrimage, the actual Mormon congregation in the town was always very small, and bore no relation to the role occupied by Liverpool in Mormon strategy, or to its subsequent place in Mormon hagiography. By 1850 when an average of 2500 persons per annum were passing through the Mormon Emigration Agency in Liverpool, and creating a considerable social problem for the local authorities, the regular Liverpool congregation, not more than 70 to 80 strong, was assembling in a tiny chapel in Oldham Street⁽³⁰⁾. They were still there in 1879 though much reduced in numbers - the total annual number of British baptisms in fact rarely reached by this date four figures⁽³¹⁾. When, twelve years later, a reporter visited the Liverpool Mormons, by now assembling in a tiny chapel in Bittern Street, he found only sixteen persons in attendance, and a general state of apathy pervading the entire community⁽³²⁾. Within a few years even the Bittern Street cause had perished, and the few remaining Mormons were meeting in the European Mission Headquarters in Islington. Towards the end of the period however there was a marked stepping up of Mormon activity: missionaries were arriving in larger numbers than ever before after about 1900, and so serious was the alarm occasioned in orthodox circles that a great anti-Mormon rally was held under Evangelical auspices in Hope Hall in 1911. Even so the days of the Liverpool 'stake' and of the real upsurge of evangelising activity within the city lay in the far distant future.

The Mormons made no secret of their isolation from the rest of Christendom, though then as now their propaganda could be taken by the unwary to be just another variant of simple, warm Evangelicalism.

The Disciples or Churches of Christ which emerge as a separate denomination in England at about the same time intended from the start to act as a kind of ecumenical magnet, drawing Christians of all denominations together on the basis of the simplest confessional standard.

As in most towns the Disciples in Liverpool began to meet separately when they were expelled from the decaying Scotch Baptist cause in Hunter Street for the 'heresy of Campbellism' in 1839⁽³³⁾. At once the enthusiastic 'Campbellites' began to preach in the open air in various parts of the town, and within a few years had established three successful chapels, in Windsor Hall, Thirlmere Street (Everton) and Windsor Street, Toxteth Park, together with mission stations in Lumden Street and Chatsworth Street. Most of their converts were of working-class background, but their most distinguished and active family, the Tickles, were timber merchants⁽³⁴⁾.

Unfortunately of course the original ecumenical design of the Disciples was soon frustrated, and by the 1870s they had emerged as a useful, if obscure, Baptist sect. Then, their American bretheren, feeling that the English churches' witness -was imperfect in many ways, founded in 1874 the Foreign Christian Missionary Society to reclaim the English Disciples to a new and 'improved' version of the original Campbellite faith⁽³⁵⁾. This move could only lead to an unhappy rivalry in which one side or the other would flounder. In Liverpool a vigorous American evangelist, the Rev. M.D. Todd, soon gathered a good congregation of Disciples, some new, some old, and after meeting temporarily in Granby Hall, took a church in Upper Parliament Street (called the Christian or Christian Association chapel to distinguish it from the older native Churches of Christ) in 1884, and another in Waterworks Street, Bootle, called simply 'Park Chapel' the same year⁽³⁶⁾. But this advance was only accomplished at a very heavy price: the missions in Lumden Street and Windsor Hall were stripped of their congregations, and closed soon afterwards. Chatsworth Street struggled on helplessly till it too closed in 1896. Only Thirlmere Road in the north and Windsor Street in the south held their own, and by 1900 their combined evening congregations were less than half that of Upper Parliament Street chapel⁽³⁷⁾. During the next ten years however the tide flowed in the opposite direction, for like so many organizations of American origin, Upper Parliament Street fragmented almost to the

point of extinction within the next ten years, while the Everton and Toxteth churches not only recovered substantially but were in 1910 joined by the former Baptist chapel in Empire Street, to give them numerical superiority over their American rivals. Fortunately this internecine strife which completely belied the original ideals of the founding fathers was ended in 1917 when the two groups of churches finally united as a single denomination⁽³⁸⁾.

It is a far cry from the Evangelical simplicity of the Disciples to the fascinating richness and elaborate ritual of the Catholic Apostolic Church which, probably because it is now almost extinct, has recently attracted the sympathetic attention of a number of church historians and liturgiologists⁽³⁹⁾.

Following Edward Irving's much-advertised conversion and the spectacular outburst of speaking with tongues at the Scots Church in Regent Square, London, there was a considerable time-lag before the Catholic Apostolic Church was formally inaugurated, and it was not till 1836 that an 'apostle' first arrived in the town of Liverpool. In the later 1830s however a number of followers were won to the strange cultus of the Irvingites, drawn by both their fervent worship embodied in an unusually rich liturgical setting and its adventist emphases and strange biblical exegesis. In 1840 a full church organization with a presiding 'angel', prophets, deacons, elders and doorkeepers e.t.c. had emerged in Liverpool, and the foundation stone of the Church of the Holy Apostles, Canning Street, was laid early the same year. It proved however a difficult task to erect a building architecturally sufficient for the splendours of Catholic Apostolic worship, and the church was not finally completed till 1856. By that date the novelty of the movement had somewhat worn off, and the Irvingites, a haughty and exclusive caste in Liverpool as elsewhere, were beginning that process of self-concern with the niceties of ritual and interpretation which eventually led to the Church's literally condemning itself to death. Though a reporter visiting the church in 1888 paid the conventional tributes to the solemn and moving dignity of Irvingite worship, the numbers in attendance scarcely filled half the church (which seated about 330), and the decline which had by that date set in continued unabated till the end of the period⁽⁴⁰⁾—

The Irvingites provided an unparalleled fusion of the charismatic and the sacerdotal in their public offices: the Plymouth Brethren, like the Quakers, carried Protestant reductionism to its ultimate limits but,

unlike them, developed no social concern and deepened rather than bridged the gulf which separated them from an evil and apostate world. Dublin, Bristol, Plymouth and London are the early centres of Brethren activity: their arrival in Liverpool, despite the fact that Darby was holding occasional meetings here in the 1840s was bound therefore to be somewhat belated. The earliest meeting for which the only evidence is the Religious Census of 1851 was without doubt in a room off Canning Street where William Collingwood (later a distinguished evangelist among the Open Brethren) was recorded as conducting a meeting for 80 persons morning and evening⁽⁴¹⁾.

How long they continued here is impossible to determine - by the early 1870s their meeting hall was in Crown Street, a well-attended place of worship from which they were embarking on a great deal of open-air evangelism⁽⁴²⁾. At this date there were several meetings in existence on the Wirral where conditions seemed far more favourable to the spread of small sects especially those like the Brethren with a strong middle-class appeal. It was however the Moody and Sankey revival which effectively put the Brethren onto the ecclesiastical map. From 1875 onwards under the leadership of two medical practitioners, Drs Owles and Eddis⁽⁴³⁾, the Brethren became active all over the town, taking small halls and distributing tracts. In 1878 to supplement the Crown Street work, two other Gospel Halls were erected, Boaler Street in the North end and Alexander Hall, Park Hall Road in the south. Both these were eminently successful, the premises at Alexander Hall were soon found to be too small, and the work transferred first to Admiral Street and later to David Street chapels. A year later a fourth centre was opened in the Iron Room, Churnet Street, Kirkdale.

Between 1880 and 1897, for which year a list of Open Brethren meetings is available⁽⁴⁴⁾ a considerable quickening of activity took place. The Crown Street work was transferred to Windsor Hall, Holden Street, where it still continues. New meetings appeared in the south end in Smithdown Lane (Albion Hall), Haliburton Street, off Park Road, Selbourne Street, Princes Park and Wellington Street, Garston. In the east a new Gospel Hall was flourishing in Pilch Lane, Knotty Ash, and in the north causes had been established in Crete Hall, Great Homer Street, Salop Street off Walton Road, Romeo Street in Bootle, and Albert Hall, Waterloo. This of course was a silent, unobtrusive and

and scarcely noticed development. The Brethren did not boast publicly of their achievements and are notoriously neglectful of their history which makes any chronicling of their growth extremely difficult. In the four Daily Post censuses they successfully excluded the enumerators from their meetings in every case, so that it is impossible to assess their numerical progress. Nevertheless there appears to have been a marked slackening off in activity in the early years of the present century, which coincided with a series of schisms, mainly on 'exclusive' lines, several of the meetings seem to have perished, and by 1914 only those in Boaler Street, Crete Hall, Churnet Street, Admiral Street, Windsor Hall, Romeo Street and Knowsley Road, Seaforth, are remembered as being flourishing and expanding causes⁽⁴⁵⁾.

(C) Purging The Establishment

Brethren who abandon their meetings invariably find their spiritual home in the Church of England rather than in any branch of Nonconformity, a circumstance which not only underlines the peculiarly comprehensive character of the Establishment but the unlikelihood of any Evangelical offshoot from the same making substantial progress, particularly in recent times. Such has been the unhappy fate of the Free Church of England.

The origins of this singular body belong in date to the 1840s and in place to the West Country where Bishop Philpotts' old fashioned high churchmanship was mainly responsible for the hiving-off of this militantly Evangelical communion⁽⁴⁶⁾. In Liverpool of course the Anglican churches were so overwhelmingly Evangelical in character that no such schismatic movement was really necessary at all, and the appearance of the Free Church of England here was due entirely to the missionary labours of one man, the Reverend Thomas Worrall, an ordained minister of the Church, who arrived here from London in 1871 and began to preach in the open air to the workingmen of the Whitechapel district. (The striking similarity between his activity and that of the more successful George Wise two decades later is at once obvious). Soon a considerable working-class following had been gathered, and Emmanuel Free Church of England had been established (largely at the expense of the wealthier supporters of the Anglican Laymen's League) in Stanfield Road, Everton, as an outpost of Anglican Orangeism⁽⁴⁷⁾. Worrall who died in 1882 was succeeded after a short interval by Bishop William Baker and Emmanuel thus became in the 1890s the main church of the Northern Synod of this

small episcopal body.

At this point however the infant cause was affected by a movement identical with what was happening at the same time within the Churches of Christ, the ^cruption of a new and 'improved' version of their faith from America where the Reformed Episcopal Church had made its appearance in the 1860s⁽⁴⁸⁾ in circumstances very similar to those in Devon twenty years earlier.

In England the presiding bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church was the Rt. Rev. T. Huband Gregg and it was he who was approached in 1881 by a few worshippers in Tuebrook who could no longer abide the ritualism of the parish church there with a view to founding a Reformed Episcopal Church in their neighbourhood⁽⁴⁹⁾. The Tuebrook cause did not grow very quickly however and it was not till 1893 that the foundation stone of Christ Church (Reformed Episcopal), Buckingham Road, was laid by Austin Taylor Esq. The first regular minister of the church, the Rev. Rowland Parker, (1901-08) built up a 200-strong congregation however and left Christ Church, Tuebrook as flourishing as the older established cause at Liscard on the Wirral.

Meanwhile the impact of this activity had had a most disruptive effect on Emmanuel Church which during the 1890s declined to the point of extinction. An attempt to revive the work was made in 1900 by the Rev. Charles Black, working from a tiny building known as Christ Church in Miranda Road, Everton, and this cause was still extant when the Free Church of England and the Reformed Episcopal Church which had often professed a desire for unity but had often reacted on one another with grievous effects finally merged in 1927. By this time both Liverpool churches were very small, and their respective supporters had reluctantly to concede that what was true nationally was true in Liverpool also - a hybrid Church such as this which was neither Established nor Dissenting failed to arouse the enthusiasm of more than a handful of devoted adherents.

(D) The Sectarian Wilderness

The growth of all kinds of orthodox missionary activities in the 1870s, and the rapid spread of Brethrenism was followed by the appearance of a large number of heretical groups securing an obscure but usually permanent footing in the central area of the city. It is a depressing tale, of more interest perhaps to the sociologist than to the church

historian⁽⁵⁰⁾ who can see in this mushroom growth little more than the evidence of a common Christian tradition in process of fragmentation and decay.

The Christadelphians made their way from Birkenhead to Liverpool in 1879 and began to meet in Hardman Hall, Hardman Street, a building they still retained in 1914 and which was till recently their only 'ecclesia' within the city. Progress was very slow, they were frequently decimated by schism, and their horrible 'Dirty Jesus' controversy of 1883 nearly extinguished them altogether. A reporter visiting them in 1894 was not impressed either by their past history or future prospects⁽⁵¹⁾. Rarely did they attract more than 100 worshippers.

Spiritism appeared at about the same time. The Spiritists assembled during the later 70's in a house in Grove Street, but in 1879 moved to Daulby Hall⁽⁵²⁾ which remained their Liverpool meeting place till 1912. They seem to have been more successful than the Christadelphians - the Daily Post census showed 350 present for worship at the evening service in 1902. But this figure was not sustained, and had been halved by 1912.

Meanwhile three Christian Scientists had begun to meet in a private house in 1902, and had taken a room in Sandon Terrace, Upper Duke Street, in 1904. A church with a membership of 21 was organized in November 1905, and more extensive premises taken in Leece Street the following year. The first Lecture was given in 1907 and the first Reading Room opened in Old Post Office Place in 1912⁽⁵³⁾.

By this date new sects were emerging thick and fast. A Seventh Day Adventist Gospel Mission Hall was opened in Selwyn Street, Kirkdale, in 1912, a Pentecostal Mission in Brownlow Hill in 1914. Theosophists were meeting in Gambia Terrace, the emissaries of the Watch Tower organization were already pacing the streets. And the keener student of sectarian life could have found in Liverpool even more curious native growths, which because they had passed beyond the pale of Christianity, of theism even, are beyond the scope of this work - the Chinese Republican church, the Positiv^{ist} church where the disciples of Comte assembled or the Ethical Church, Windsor Street⁽⁵⁴⁾. Of the making of sects there is no apparent end.

CHAPTER NINE

UNITARIANISM,

THE ARISTOCRACY OF DISSENT

(1) The Temples of Rational Nonconformity

There are by James Martineau's definition⁽¹⁾ three phases of Unitarian development in the 19th Century which are reflected in the history of the local churches. There is firstly the Arian hangover from the previous century, the phase through which the two Liverpool Presbyterian congregations were passing when the period opens, and one distinguished by breadth of thought, tolerance and graciousness, lack of enthusiasm for proselytism, and slow decay. There succeeded the Unitarian phase properly called, when the theology of the liberal churches, following the lead of Priestley, was hardened into a narrow dogmatism, centred on the unipersonality of the deity, but accepting the messiahship of a 'simply human' Jesus, as attested by his miracles and resurrection, a phase of aggressive, and to the older Presbyterians, embarrassing, missionary endeavour, and eager confrontation of the orthodox churches in an endless series of 'Unitarian controversies'. This second period not only represents a serious attempt to embrace the working classes within the folds of liberal dissent, but is closely allied to a distinctive determinism in philosophy, and cold, calculating Utilitarianism in political thought.

Finally there ensued in the mid-30's by way of reaction (and here Liverpool because it was the home of the leading malcontents was the pivotal force of the whole movement) the third 'Transcendentalist' or 'spiritual' phase of development, when the 'Quaternion', the Revs. Martineau, Thom, Tayler and Wicksteed, sought firstly by way of emotional protest to embark upon a thorough theological reconstruction within the liberal churches, basing their efforts on the thought of the American Dr. Channing. Under their inspired leadership 'the soul's demand for less belief and more faith' led to a deliberate onslaught against the 'taint of Utilitarianism', and the 'barren spiritual pride' of Priestleyanism, and resulted in a religion of pure theism, a concept of God 'not as first cause prefixed to a scheme of things', but as 'Indwelling light, pervading all'. The seat of authority in religion was discovered not in a literally-inspired Scripture, but in the soul of man, and Christ was no longer treated as the object of theological contention, but was spoken of in the hushed tones of reverant mysticism.

This revolt (which can be represented as the Romantic movement catching up belatedly with the rationalist Unitarians) demanded a renewed High Churchmanship, the revival of the Presbyterian name and system, and ministerial dignity. It was in fact for all its bold liberalism basically authoritarian, led directly to the enlightened but loftily paternalistic Domestic Mission movement, involved a strange lingering for the mystique of an Established Church, and produced in some a deliberate cultivation of superior airs and an affected aestheticism⁽²⁾.

In the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods however all these future trends were merely embryonic in the two Liverpool churches which were struggling with ever-diminishing success under a predominantly Arian ministry. Not merely because their laity exposed themselves, as the 'Liverpool Jacobins' to the fury of the local Establishment, but because they now stood alone against a reviving and powerful Orthodoxy⁽³⁾ the Unitarians found themselves isolated and friendless. Their peculiar position was underlined by a disgraceful controversy of 1790 when a group of their ministers attending the ordination services of the Rev. Samuel Medley were publicly attacked and ridiculed from the Byrom Street pulpit⁽⁴⁾. Persecution did not however, as is often the case, give them any accession of numbers. Both congregations did indeed at this time remove to new and more commodious chapels, Kay Street to the octagonal spaciousness of Paradise Street chapel in 1791, and Benn's Garden to the rugged plainness of Renshaw Street in 1811⁽⁵⁾. But in neither case was this move dictated by a need for increased accommodation, but only by the fact that the neighbourhood of Benn's Garden had become so unsavoury and that of Kay Street had not been built up as had been expected. Though Paradise Street under Yates held its numbers fairly well, Renshaw Street under Lewin declined sharply. Richard Wright, the Unitarian missionary, visiting the town in 1813, found 700 hearers in the former, but only 250 in the latter⁽⁶⁾. As early as 1809 a correspondent in the Monthly Repository was lamenting that despite their beautiful buildings, wealth, fine music, and the great respectability of their ministry, the seeds of decay were already present⁽⁷⁾. Four years later Mr. H. Taylor of Liverpool, writing in the same journal, was more emphatic, and the Repository only published his letter on the decay

of Presbyterianism in the town with sincere apologies for the vehemence of its tone.

Perhaps the real wonder of these years is that the older of the two churches, which always prided themselves on being 'one congregation which for purposes of convenience meets in two separate places'⁽⁸⁾ did not die out altogether. As Lewin's age and incompetence increased, and his theology by degrees grew more outmoded and sterile, Yates who was more willing to come to terms with Priestleyan Unitarianism received a number of members transferred from the sister church. Many, it is clear, stayed on at Renshaw Street only out of loyalty to the old minister and on his resignation in 1816 the Boltons and the older Holt family all removed to Paradise Street⁽⁹⁾. Lewin's ministry indeed ended tragically. An anonymous pamphlet was circulated criticising him, and eventually his resignation was forced by 'the few remaining members'. A bargain was then struck with the next minister that "in case of the congregation being tired of him before he of them, he shall upon having it delicately hinted to him by a friend cheerfully resign and look for another congregation", an agreement which was rightly described as one of the most disgraceful transactions in the history of Liverpool Dissent⁽¹⁰⁾.

Yates' ministry lasted for only six years longer than Lewin's, though from 1812 he had been given an assistant in the person of the Rev. Pendlebury Haughton. On the termination of these two long and historic pastorates however the first of Martineau's 'phases' came definitely to a close, for both men were succeeded by earnest disciples of Priestleyan Unitarianism. Of the two, the Rev. John Grundy who came to Paradise Street in 1824 and remained there for ten years was the less uncompromising. Grundy, though he had in the year of his appointment been one of the central figures in the famous Manchester Unitarian controversy was anxious not to effect too complete a break with the past, preached 'moral and practical' discourses and eschewed theological hair-splitting, while being prepared to defend Unitarianism vigorously if and when attacked⁽¹¹⁾. His ministry in consequence was fairly uneventful.

No such restraint was however possible for the Rev. George Harris who was appointed Lewin's successor at Renshaw Street in 1816. It was odd indeed that this church should have chosen so 'advanced' a Unitarian as Harris, for in 1811 on the occasion of the chapel opening the Rev. Grundy who performed the ceremony had given great offence by referring

to the new building as a 'Unitarian chapel', when the congregation which contained a good many who still believed in the pre-existence of Christ and even a few Trinitarians had officially had it registered under the elastic term 'Presbyterian'⁽¹²⁾. Harris however, a young, aggressive and self-confident man who had already done battle on behalf of Unitarian Christianity in Calvinist Scotland was determined to shake Lewin's congregation out of its lazy compromises and sentimental Arianism into a wholehearted dogmatic Unitarianism.

He began by founding in 1818 in company with Yates the Liverpool Unitarian Fellowship Fund Society to assist working-class congregations and poor ministers in other parts of Lancashire. Then, more boldly, he organized a Unitarian Missionary Association to help him preach the gospel to the poor of Liverpool and elsewhere, and began a periodical, the 'Christian Reflector' to ventilate his opinions, and give an account of his successes. Already however, he was bothered about the 'sneers and calumnies' of some older Presbyterian families who felt that such fanaticism was more worthy of the contentious Puritans of the 17th century or the brawling Methodists of the 18th⁽¹³⁾. Nor was he aided by the ambivalent attitude of the Rev. John Yates who had supported his missionary plans keenly for a time but in 1820 had taken fright at his excessive enthusiasm, to return again to his assistance a year later with a characteristic gesture - a cheque for £110⁽¹⁴⁾. The congregation at Renshaw Street was not however so generous: they had been persuaded to raise £300 for Harris' missionary efforts, but on his return to the scene of his former labours in Scotland he had got himself into debt and was seriously neglecting his Liverpool charge. Bitter recriminations began in 1821, and Harris resigned the following year⁽¹⁵⁾.

Renshaw Street now sensibly sought a new minister from Ireland where the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church had never experienced the type of Priestleyan theology which was so much the vogue in England, and where Unitarianism presented a far more moderate and agreeable appearance. The Rev. William Hincks (1822-7), later founder and editor of the Inquirer, and his younger brother, the Rev. John Hincks, who succeeded him and died at the age of 27 in 1831 were altogether more successful, and assisted the congregation through this difficult period of theological transition far more acceptably than had the militant Harris.

By the early 1830's it was thus clear that dogmatic Unitarianism has failed to take root in this town and was destined to enjoy a far shorter ascendancy here than perhaps anywhere else⁽¹⁶⁾. The two congregations were left confused, dissatisfied and groping for a more spiritual and ennobling expression of a free religious faith. Wisely they both chose as ministers men who were undergoing a spiritual crisis not unlike their own, and in the process the Liverpool churches launched the third and most vital phase through which Liberal Dissent was to pass in its 19th century development.

The young James Martineau arrived at Paradise Street from Dublin in 1835 with a reputation as a brilliant, though somewhat wayward thinker, a detached, scholarly young man, with no intimate friends and an embarrassing reserve, already suspect as a 'neologian', who two years previously had been attacking Priestley and 'the stiff regiment of our forefathers'⁽¹⁷⁾. It was to be the congregation's privilege to accompany their 29-year old pastor along new and unexplored paths of religious endeavour. In 1836 Martineau published his *Rationale of Religious Inquiry*, a book received with dismay by his fellow-Unitarians but which showed him breaking away from the tyranny of Priestleyanism in theology, necessarianism in philosophy and Benthamism in political economy. Within a few years the revolt was gaining momentum. In 1838 Martineau persuaded his congregation to break with the narrowly sectarian British and Foreign Unitarian Association, objecting strongly to the word 'Unitarian' on account of its dogmatic implications⁽¹⁸⁾, and in 1839 he joined them in launching the *Christian Teacher* to give literary expression to the new spiritual stirrings within Unitarianism of which the two Liverpool ministers were the forerunners. In 1840 apart from his much criticised appointment as Professor at Manchester New College, he produced for his Liverpool flock 'Hymns for the Christian Church and Home' whose preface belaboured both the rationalism and puritanism of Dissent, and pleaded for the 'true creations of piety', 'the genius of the altar' (like all romantics at some stage or other, Martineau had recently discovered the Middle Ages) and 'the emotions of the mind possessed with the religious or mysterious conception of God, life, death, duty and futurity'⁽¹⁹⁾.

A new, distinctive and far richer pattern of worship was now beginning to emerge at Paradise Street: the pastoral instruction of the young was particularly attended to, and the Communion revived as the most solemn and impressive service of the church⁽²⁰⁾. In 1843 appeared the *Endeavours*. After the Christian life which despite their subtitle *Sermons of Practical Religion* further highlighted the new orientation of Martineau's religious thought. But his complete break from the 'dogmatism and acrid humours of Priestley, Bentham and Mill'⁽²¹⁾ came with the sermon *Pause and Retrospect*, the last address preached in Paradise Street chapel (1847). Here Martineau avowed that he and his people were now substituting 'the religion of Consciousness for the religion of Custom'. Neither 'the external attestation of praeternatural events', nor 'the largest amount of historical knowledge' could replace the authority of the inward conscience in its awareness of Christ as 'the mingling point of the ideal and the real'.

Martineau had long urged the removal of the congregation from the octagonal meeting house in Paradise Street which seemed to exude the very air of the 18th century rationalism he so abhorred to a church whose architectural setting would answer more adequately to the new theology. Hope Street was accordingly built in 1848, a beautiful Gothic building from the outside, but within a nightmarish jumble of pews, horribly dark and overadorned with unnecessary sculpture⁽²²⁾. While it was in building Martineau was in Germany, enjoying his 'annus mirabilis', feasting on Hegel, observing keenly the great democratic revolutions, and returning with his faith strengthened emotionally as well as philosophically, to preach the opening sermon in the new church, the hauntingly beautiful 'Watchnight lamps'.

The medieval gloom of the new Hope Street church (to say nothing of the wierd design of his new Liverpool house at Park Nook with its strange subterranean passages⁽²³⁾) answered of course to an element in Martineau's mind which alternately attracted and repelled his friends and which only the sombre lines of Watts' portrait seem able to capture effectively. For just as his High Tory political philosophy⁽²⁴⁾ betrays a cruel, almost masochistic tendency, there runs alongside his lofty spirituality a darker streak, a 'sigh of failure' or 'wail of penitence',

as he himself described it, a self-abasing, quasi-lutheran piety which is preserved in some of his best hymns, particularly 'A Voice Upon The Midnight Air' (25). Martineau's curious temperament revealed itself also in attitudes of unpleasant priggishness. He removed for instance the last vestiges of humble poverty from his chapel by getting rid of the poor boys from the charity school who used to occupy the pew beneath the pulpit, 'and whose presence was made known to me by four out of my five senses' (25). And for all his emphasis on the young, Martineau forebore to make much provision for them - in fact the social side of his congregation's life was so completely neglected that when in 1856 he departed to London he left behind an atomized company of people who did not know each other and had no other bond of unity than devotion to a remarkable pulpit personality. In some ways Mr. Martineau's ministry had not been a success.

Far greater achievements crowned the work of Martineau's colleague at Renshaw Street, the Rev. J. Hamilton Thom. Thom, like Martineau, came to Liverpool from Ireland, but unlike Martineau, who was of Norfolk-Hugnot^{ue} descent, was himself an Ulsterman, had never passed through a distinctly Priestleyan phase of Unitarianism, and under the spell of Channing had made an easy transition from Arianism to the spiritual faith of the American Transcendentalists (26).

Thom, appointed to the Renshaw Street pulpit in 1831 at the age of 23 held the same with a short break till his resignation in 1866. Viewed from any angle it was a remarkable pastorate. Theologically his position was akin to that of his slightly older contemporary at Hope Street. His mystical devotion to the Person of Christ (27) arose out of an intensely rich personal faith (28). But the sense of penitence, so conspicuous in his private devotions, was not discernible in his pulpit addresses. The Pulpit and the Sermon were for Thom second only to the Communion Service "in which we lay our hands together ~~on~~ the symbols of self-sacrifice" (29), the focal centre of worship. The preacher conceived it his duty to inspire his flock with a faith akin to his own, to expose their faults (which they permitted him to do in a most searching fashion), and summon them to action. But Thom's mystical sense of the preacher-congregation relationship ("let meditation collect the forces of the soul. Place yourselves on the track of emotion. The heat^r must muse before the fire is ready to burn" (30)) did not disguise the terribly high standards of moral conduct

which he enjoined, or his puritanical attitude towards work and duty. Preacher and congregation had no right to self-indulgence or pleasure of any kind: Thom's definition of a church was 'a body corporate of pledged workers' (31).

After a rather uncomfortable period of readjustment in which Thom more than once threatened to resign, and Mr. Henry Booth wrote to him complaining strongly of his 'exclusively spiritual and abstract sermons', which contained far too little of the practical e.t.c. (32), the congregation at Renshaw Street grew to love their new pastor with almost exaggerated devotion. William Rathbone VI whose sister Thom married confessed that he owed his inspiration to community service entirely to his pastor (33), while Henry Tate allowed that Thom had earned 'his life's love, esteem and regard' (34). Alexander Gordon spoke of 'the elevating spell of his mingled dignity and grace' (35), while that curious spiritual invalid Blanco White who sat in his congregation found that his minister alone made life tolerable and meaningful for him.

Thom, a lone, companionless figure and in his later years a recluse did not consider that the minister should ever be a public man. Having inspired the laity to service, his duty was done. Hence he never appeared on any political platform, was little known in the city, and rarely heard outside the worshipping community at Renshaw Street (36).

On just one occasion however, both he and Martineau who were alike in so many ways felt themselves compelled to take up the cudgels of public controversy. In 1839 the evangelical vicar of Christ Church, Hunter Street, the Rev. Fielding Ould, invited all local Unitarian ministers to attend a series of lectures in his church wherein the principles of Unitarianism were to be refuted. Martineau, Thom, and Giles of Toxteth Park obligingly accepted and were conducted to the 'condemned pew' of Christ Church to hear their faith soundly berated (37). The controversy which produced an enormous volume of pamphlets and printed addresses had its highlights - the brusque refusal of the Rev. Ould to attend a similar series of lectures in Renshaw Street, Dr. Shepherd's brilliant exposure of Ould who, claiming originality, had purloined his arguments word for word from Andrew Fuller's 'Calvinist and Socinian Systems Examined' (38),

the rejoicings in the Unitarian camp when three orthodox Christians, Samuel Bulley, Isaac B. Cooke and C. E. Rawlins announced their conversion, but by and large the controversy had an unreal air. The type of Unitarianism which Ould was attacking was the now outmoded Priestleyanism, and Martineau and Thom were accordingly defending a system in which they no longer believed; the very year of the controversy in fact Martineau was writing to Channing that 'the old Priestleyan mechanical system seems on the verge of collapse', 'about to give way to something better' (39).

It was perhaps only appropriate in view of their indebtedness to the Transatlantic prophet that Thom's ministry should be interrupted and Martineau's succeeded by that of Channing's nephew, the Rev. W.H. Channing (Renshaw Street, 1854-7; Hope Street 1857-61). In neither chapel however was the young Channing a conspicuous success. A delicate, idealistic young man who had just quit a Fourierist colony in America and who 'with his two clenched fists' seemed to William Rathbone V 'to be shaking the congregation down to his own convictions, whether they will or no' (40), Channing's americanisms and wild radicalism had soon alienated his supporters and produced divisions in both congregations. In great haste Renshaw Street recalled the Rev. Thom from his semi-retirement, and Hope Street also persuaded another of Martineau's friends, the Rev. Charles Wicksteed, to accept spiritual leadership of their society.

Wicksteed's ministry which lasted from 1861 to 1872 marked an intensification of those features of Martineau's which the older generation of Priestleyan Unitarians found so disquieting. The slightly superior airs - Wicksteed once laconically described the poor as affording 'a few picturesque and Walter Scottish adornments to a well-to-do congregation' (41) was matched by a high churchmanship which led him to introduce a font and chanting, though his people held out against his wilder innovations such as god-parents and confirmation, as well as against his liturgical excesses (42). He approached moreover even more closely to the Established Church, of whose affairs he was an acknowledged expert and of which he regarded himself as in some sense a member. His aim was 'quality' rather than 'quantity' in his congregation, his preaching was often very abstruse and demanded an audience as intellectually well-equipped as he was himself. (Numbers especially towards the end of his pastorate fell off markedly).

Theologically he was more advanced than Martineau; nature mysticism was the keynote of his preaching, and Wicksteed throughout his Liverpool

pastorate retained his picturesque farm at Hafod, North Wales, travelling into the city only for the Sunday Services. In his later years he was assisted at Hope Street by the Rev. Alexander Gordon, a non-subscribing Presbyterian and anti-Unitarian, historian and biographer of Nonconformity, who more than once startled his congregation (which was by this time not unused to novelty) by addressing his prayers to the Lord Jesus Christ⁽⁴³⁾.

Wicksteed resigned in 1872 to devote himself to his farming and what he called a 'ministry at large', a series of public lectures on theological and moral topics in the great towns and cities⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Throughout his ministry Wicksteed whose considerable literary labours were virtually over by the time he came to Liverpool was completely eclipsed by the more brilliant, not to say notorious, pastorate of the Rev. Charles Beard at Renshaw Street, during which Liverpool Unitarianism as a force for spiritual progress and public well-being reached its triumphant apogee.

Beard, a handsome, impressive figure with strong, clear-cut, intellectual features and an amazing range of voice which made him the finest orator in the denomination attracted the attention of the town to Renshaw Street chapel for a variety of reasons other than the purely personal. He was for example already well known as a scholar, the editor of the Theological Review (1864-79), the most learned English religious periodical of the day, the compiler together with his father of Cassell's Latin Dictionary, the historian of Port Royal and acknowledged authority on Pascal. In Liverpool he was to add to his academic reputation in at least two directions. Firstly in 1870 he and Wicksteed were chosen to address the British Association then meeting in Liverpool, Beard on 'The Place of Theology Among the Sciences', Wicksteed on 'The Divine Voice in the World', and their rebuttal of the fashionable atheism of Tindal and Huxley aroused great interest and provided the local Unitarians with intense pride in the intellectual reputation of their ministers⁽⁴⁵⁾. Secondly in 1883 Beard produced his famous History of the Reformation, a plea for a new reformation more in accord with the science of the day, a book which received high praise from Gladstone and Acton and whose intrinsic value was recognized when it was reprinted eighty years later.

It is not merely in his courageous handling of the relationship of religion and science or his insistence on a new reformation which makes Beard a strikingly contemporary figure, and puts us in mind of the Christian radicalism of the present day. Present in all his preaching are other familiar emphases, a courageous avowal of the intellectual difficulties of modern man in finding God, the dread of a future of crass materialism and the withering away of the spiritual dimension of human existence⁽⁴⁶⁾, a passionate devotion to the person of Christ, even when, as a comparison of his last volume with its significant title 'The Universal Christ' with his earlier works abundantly proves, his religious thought was moving rapidly leftwards⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Naturally preaching of this novel kind drew even larger numbers to Renshaw Street chapel. The morning congregation remained the fashionable gathering of great Unitarian families it had always been, but in the evening crowds of young middle-class persons drawn from their orthodox places of worship by the magic of his oratory which was often said to have had a stirringly emotional and evangelical power unique among his coreligionists⁽⁴⁸⁾ gave to Unitarianism a popularity in Liverpool which it had never possessed before⁽⁴⁹⁾. On the other hand Thom's 'worshipping community' was shattered beyond repair. Beard's preaching in fact turned the chapel into what was little more than an assembly hall, which architecturally it was suited to be, but which was completely alien to the whole Unitarian tradition⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Beard's pulpit manner indeed scarcely differed at all from his platform style and it is in his capacity as a public man that he differs most from Thom and acquired the local reputation which latterly made him so prominent a figure in Liverpool. His work towards the founding of Liverpool University College, his introduction in 1860 of Hospital Sunday Collections which had become almost universal in the Liverpool churches by 1866⁽⁵¹⁾, above all his participation in municipal politics wherein he became the Liverpool Liberals' chief spokesman and exercised a Whiggish restraint which the warmer radicals found obnoxious belong properly to our final chapter. But both as a spiritual guide and a public reformer Beard displayed one quality which was commented on by nearly all who met him - a coldness of temperament and unapproachableness which repelled all but those of his own particular tastes and persuasion. For Beard, who found even the middle-classes 'rough and disagreeable'⁽⁵²⁾, could never enjoy social

intercourse with the poor, only lecture to them, or more effectively still, about them. It was thus in vain that in 1885 he commenced a new style of religious service in the Rotunda Theatre, specially designed for the humbler classes - there could in the nature of things be neither dialogue nor response. No man, it was often remarked, pleaded more eloquently for a new reformation, a spiritual resurgence awakening the totality of his fellow countrymen, and no man was so ill-fitted to further it, save among his own peculiar high-brow sect⁽⁵³⁾.

(2) Reaching The Poor - Unitarian Style

The public services of the two great chapels, exciting and intellectually stimulating as they must have been to the middle-class families which attended them still left unanswered the problem of what religious provision the Unitarians were making for the poor of the town. For men engaged in philanthropic and political activities which brought them into direct contact with the needier classes, this question must have been posed with an added urgency.

As long as the Churches of rational dissent were in their Arian phase, no distinctive missionary work was conceivable. The congregations were too respectable, too much given to their 'latitude and platitude' and suspicious of 'enthusiasm' ever to embark on such ventures. But with the advent of Unitarianism proper and particularly with the arrival of the Rev. George Harris in the town, preaching the rational gospel to the poor became, as has been noted, the keynote of this second, dogmatic and aggressively evangelistic phase of theological development. Harris began by opening in 1818 a room in Great Crosshall Street for week-evening services, conducted by laymen and adapted to the capacities of the poor⁽⁵⁴⁾ and not hampered by the reticence and reserve of the older Presbyterian chapels. Sunday afternoon services were added in 1819 and the humble worshippers were formally recognised as the third Unitarian congregation in the town. Under the leadership of Harris himself, Timothy Jevons, John Finch 'the poor man's friend', F.B. Wright, the Unitarian printer, and with occasional help from the Rev. Yates⁽⁵⁵⁾, the congregation grew and in 1820 acquired a chapel in the same street. Here instruction in 'rational theology' was given to the 'poor and middling classes', a good library was built up, and a special effort made to attract the humbler members 'of other sects of less taste and understanding'⁽⁵⁶⁾. Soon one of these, Mr Thomas Mercer, a poor mechanic

and formerly a 'Calvinistic Baptist', had become the leading preacher⁽⁵⁷⁾, and a move was made to a larger building, a vacated Roman Catholic chapel in Sir Thomas Buildings⁽⁵⁸⁾. This however was too ambitious, particularly as Harris had now left the town, and within a year the little flock was back in Great Crosshall Street where F.B. Wright appears as their 'gratuitous pastor'⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Numbers however, as the annual congregational reports printed in the Christian Reflector (a missionary Unitarian publication edited by Wright himself in Liverpool) make clear, were dropping, from 150 in 1823 to less than 70 a few years later. Accordingly the congregation set off on its travels once again, taking a small room in Hunter Street in 1824⁽⁶⁰⁾. By this time the attitudes of Renshaw and Paradise Streets had hardened once more against 'missionary Unitarianism', and Hunter Street felt itself deeply grieved when it was not invited to send delegates to meet Mr W Smith M.P. who came to address the town's Unitarians in 1825⁽⁶¹⁾. The interminable lecture courses on the early ages of Christianity, the controverted doctrines of Christianity, the corruptions of Christianity, the evidences of Unitarianism e.t.c. went on and on, attracting fewer and fewer auditors until after 1830, the congregation is heard of no more.

Missionary Unitarianism, successful in other parts of Lancashire, had failed to take root in Liverpool itself, where new forms of endeavour were obviously necessary if the poor, or even a tiny section of them, were to be brought within the ambit of the liberal churches. This fresh impetus was given by the third 'spiritual' phase of Unitarian development, and coincided with the arrival in the town of its two most distinguished exponents, Martineau and Thom.

The idea of the Domestic Mission originated not of course with these two ministers but with the Rev. Joseph Tuckermann of Boston U.S.A.⁽⁶²⁾. Tuckermann's visit to Liverpool in 1834 seemed to the two young men (Martineau was then 29 and Thom 26) 'like the angel descending to stir the sleeping waters'⁽⁶³⁾. At once a programme of action was laid before the leading laymen of the two churches, and their financial and personal help solicited. The philosophy behind the whole scheme was disarmingly simple. There were, Martineau believed, two ways of appealing to the poor, either through their senses and imagination (a way open to

Catholics but debarred to Unitarians) or through their affections. To cultivate the latter, a man of singular talents (no hewer of wood or drawer of water', declared Thom, 'but one capable of inspiring even the very poor with worthy views of their nature and destiny'⁽⁶⁴⁾ should be chosen to single out a group of families, amongst whom his sphere of labour would lie. He should not dispense alms (the Transcendentalists though they had shaken off most of Benthamism held firmly to Utilitarian economics), but should befriend the poor and assist them by revealing to them their own hidden resources and neglected abilities to improve themselves, become respectable, and take their place as useful citizens within the wider community⁽⁶⁵⁾. If after a time there was a spontaneous demand for a church 'where only doctrines of peace and love would be heard and nothing of strife or hatred', then the missionary should gather a congregation from among the families he had contacted. But there must be no attempt to proselytize. Provident, Clothing, Benefit and Book societies were the missionary's first aim: his ministry would involve his becoming 'lawyer, insurance agent, amanuensis and friend' to the poor, as well as their spiritual comforter⁽⁶⁶⁾. The guiding principles of the Domestic Mission movement were thus a mixture of heady romance and shrewd realism, and no one combined such qualities in more singular proportions than the young Devonian poet, artist, mystic and Unitarian minister, John Johns, who appeared before a meeting of the Domestic Mission Committee at Paradise Street in 1838, faced the stern-countenanced businessmen seated in their red plush and gold chairs around a great mahogany table and waxed so lyrical as he unfolded his vision of what such a movement might become that the young ladies present with difficulty suppressed their giggles behind their handkerchiefs⁽⁶⁷⁾.

But Johns who described himself as 'a dreamer of dreams' and seemed to Thom 'as sensitive as if he had no skin'⁽⁶⁸⁾ was to surprise everyone by the intense practicality of his approach. Very quickly in fulfilment of the ideals of the founders and with the help of their generous subventions he had established a Provident Society, and a library, opened a Mission House and a lecture room, a small school, a savings bank, a Friendly Loan society, and an allotments association⁽⁶⁹⁾. The latter was a somewhat unexpected development, but as Johns himself characteristically expressed it, 'in allotments we find Merrie England again, not

in fields reeking with the conflict of the Roses, nor in outlaws' bows ringing in the moonlit glades of Sherwood' (70).

The yearly mission reports which John produced are rightly regarded by local historians as the most valuable source material for social conditions in Liverpool in the 1840s (71), and it was no coincidence that it was Johns who undertook the local enquiries on behalf of the Health of Towns Commission of 1843. Inevitably however a man so circumstanced was led to go beyond the original terms of reference of his appointment, and demand municipal action, for, as he discovered, there was a limit to what he could achieve when the physical conditions of the slums remained as notorious as those of the St. James Street area where his sphere of operations lay. Accordingly while continuing to condemn private charity, 'the one great source of despondency and degradation among the lower classes of the poor' (72), he is found advocating free schooling, the opening of parks and museums on Sundays, the compulsory closing down of cellar dwellings, temperance legislation, provision of open spaces, reduction of shop hours and legislation on sweated trades. More significantly still he was active in the work of the Liverpool Association of Assistant Tradesmen, one of the embryo labour organizations of the town (73). While Johns lived, these activities were not censured by his committee - rather they provided inspiration for those members who held sway in local affairs to press for just the kind of reforms the missionary was recommending.

His ministry ended in tragedy. The sudden influx of Irish famine victims in 1846-7 rendered nugatory most of the good work he had done. Problems of overcrowding, violence and disease now seemed insoluble - perhaps it was only fitting that Johns should in 1847 have died a martyr's death, contracting typhoid from a visit to a foetid cellar.

It was left to Johns' three successors, Francis Bishop (1848-56), Samuel A. Steinthal (1857-63) and John Shannon (1865-78) to try to salvage something from the wreck. All rose nobly to the occasion; Bishop by adding Week Evening Concerts to the Mission's activities, and finding for it a permanent home in Beaufort Street; Steinthal by securing through the generosity of the Mellys and the Holts a whole suite of school buildings and a 'shelter for fallen women'; Shannon by associating the Mission closely with the District Nursing Movement recently introduced by William Rathbone.

Beneath the surface however tensions were beginning to develop: committee and missionaries alike were worried by the fact that increasingly the Mission attracted only respectable artisans, and that nothing could be done for the lowest and most degraded classes⁽⁷⁴⁾. The missionaries moreover were beginning to press even more loudly for municipal reforms, Bishop for example making yearly pleas for corporation housing, Steinthal for local legislation to curb prostitution and intemperance, the latter provoking the resignation from the Committee of Mr Albert Mott.

Both men moreover stood politically far to the Left, Bishop turning the Mission into an English terminus for escaped slaves from the southern states, Steinthal advocating women's suffrage, and organizing the Friends of Kossuth movement in the town. Such activities did not arouse the Committee's censure, but fears were expressed over the participation of Steinthal and his assistant, Mr John Wilson, in the affairs of the Liverpool Co-operative Society, of which with their fellow Unitarian, John Finch, they were the founding fathers⁽⁷⁵⁾. The Committee had no objection to such an enlargement of the missionary's work which was a natural outcome of the task on which he was engaged; they did however fear that he was now beginning to cast his net a little too widely, and that the life of the Beaufort Street Mission would suffer accordingly.

The Domestic Mission idea was nevertheless sufficiently popular among the Unitarian laity for a second scheme to be launched in the north end of the town in 1859, centred on Bond Street⁽⁷⁶⁾. The work was very similar to that of the older Mission, and during the ministries of the Revs. George Beaumont (1859-63), John Whitworth (1863-7) and H.W. Hawkes (1871-87) the same problems are encountered, the same sort of organizations founded, and a new series of invaluable reports produced to illuminate the social condition of the town in its mid-Victorian years. It is noticeable how there is the same admixture of harsh attitudes - Beaumont maintained that extreme poverty was in most cases due entirely to idleness and vice, while Hawkes attributed nine tenths of physical destitution to the drink problem, with radical leanings - Whitworth like Steinthal earned the censure of the Committee for his overenthusiastic work for co-operation. But on the whole harmony was maintained most successfully, the laity responded with extreme generosity to the financial demands made upon them, and the two Domestic Missions soon became not the least of those good works in which the great Unitarian families took such legitimate pride

and caused them to be spoken of with awe and reverence in the town.

(3) The Radical Elite

The history of Liverpool Unitarianism is not merely a record of spiritual emancipation, though this is the standpoint from which it has usually been told. There is in addition the superabundance of good works carried out by a small knot of intelligent and closely inter-related families who derived their spiritual sustenance from the two great chapels. They are the radical elite of the Victorian city, but it is very often forgotten just what were their origins, where their economic power lay, and how late was their arrival in the city of their adoption.

Of the leading families already established in the town in 1786 remarkably few founded commercial or professional dynasties which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Two of them indeed, the Prestons and the Mathers, conformed, and are later conspicuous in Anglican affairs and Tory politics. William Durning, liquor merchant, died without a son in 1830 after which date his business was carried on by his partner, Edmund Lewin: this historic name thereafter survived only in those families such as the Holts and Lawrences with whom the Durnings had intermarried⁽⁷⁷⁾. The English family too failed to prosper as markedly as many others who appeared later on the local scene. Mr Charles J. English who died at a very advanced age in 1898 and was probably the last of the old pre-1832 freemen had early in his career become a subordinate partner in the ship-broking firm of his fellow Unitarian, Francis Boulton, by whom he and his children were completely eclipsed. (The firm of Boulton, English, Brandon and Co. later changed its title to F. Boulton and Co.).

The Harveys, the noted family of lawyers, were likewise fairly conspicuous in the town in the early nineteenth century when the frequent appearance of the five stalwart Harvey brothers on the radical platform was one of the familiar sights of Liverpool, but after their deaths their sons were comparatively unknown till the gruesome death of Mr Enoch Harvey on Otterspool Railway Station in 1890 recalled the town to their importance in days gone by. Even the Roscoes fade into the background following the meteoric rise of William senior during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. Roscoe, the son of a market gardener, who dabbled in the legal profession, land reclamation, colliery ownership and banking and the basis of whose fortune is even today somewhat of a mystery, went bankrupt in 1816 and his numerous family was left to fend for itself⁽⁷⁸⁾. But their

dreamy, poetical, hyper-sensitive natures paralysed what practical powers they possessed: W.S. Roscoe (1782-1843), Cambridge-educated and serjeant-at-mace to the Liverpool Court of Passage, managed in his early life to survive a double bankruptcy and died a comparatively poor man⁽⁷⁹⁾. His son, W.C. Roscoe (1823-59) retired from the legal profession at the age of 37 to devote himself entirely to a 'religious life' of contemplation and writing⁽⁸⁰⁾. William Roscoe's other sons were undistinguished - Henry (1800-36), his father's biographer, became assessor to the Mayor of Liverpool's court, Edward (1785-1834) an iron merchant, and Thomas (1791-1871) a wellknown author and translator from the Italian. After this generation they are heard of in the town no more.

Roscoe's most loyal friend, James Currie, the distinguished Liverpool physician and author, who died in 1805, likewise failed to establish a permanent dynasty, despite the fact that he married the daughter of William Wallace, the prosperous Unitarian merchant, and that the Wallace business was carried on by his son W.W. Currie. The latter died without issue in 1840⁽⁸¹⁾.

The fate of the Fletchers and Thornleys is very similar. Thomas Fletcher whose 'Autobiographical Reminiscences' written in 1843 and printed fifty years later is one of the most fascinating local publications of the period, was in 1782 apprenticed through the good offices of the Rev. John Yates to the firm of James France and Nephew, Jamaica merchants, and taken on as a partner in 1789. He was to suffer severely however from the rapacity of the Yates family, and his firm which became Fletcher, Yates and Co. in 1815 was dissolved in 1827. A banking partnership with the Roscoes was equally disastrous, and Thomas Fletcher whose daughters married respectively Henry Roscoe, Charles Booth and Charles Crompton ended his life uncomfortably as the pensioner of his sons-in-law⁽⁸²⁾. The Thornley brothers, Thomas (1781-1862) and John Daniel (1787-1848), having passed through an apprenticeship to the Rathbones, set up their own family firm, T and J.D. Thornley, American merchants, in 1809. They were conspicuous in Liverpool till 1835 when Thomas transferred his interests to Wolverhampton, having been elected M.P. for that borough. Thereafter the firm was of less importance and the family tradition of devoted service to Unitarianism and radical politics was carried on largely by a cousin, Samuel Thornley (1793-1881), a woollen draper⁽⁸³⁾.

Two families however which had risen to prominence even before 1800

retained a key place in Liverpool throughout the whole nineteenth century, the Yates and the Booths. Inheriting their father's business acumen, three of the Yates brothers took their places among the wealthiest men of Victorian Liverpool. The eldest, J.B. Yates (d. 1855), West India merchant of the firm of Fletcher, Yates and Co., the second, J.A. Yates (d. 1863), apprenticed to the Rathbones at the same time as Thomas Thornley, and later a leading shipbroker, the third, R.V. Yates (d. 1857) the senior partner in the iron firm of Yates, Cox and Co., were all in their way as noteworthy on the local scene as the fourth son, James (d. 1871), who, after entering the Unitarian ministry, finished his career as secretary to the British Association For the Advancement of Science⁽⁸⁴⁾, was distinguished nationally.

The sons of Charles Booth (1749-1832) were worthy successors of an enterprising father. Henry (1788-1869) became famous as the inventor of the multitubular boiler and promotor of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway⁽⁸⁵⁾, James as a barrister, while Charles (1799-1860) continued the family grain business. This declined sharply however after 1815 and it was Charles' sons, Alfred (1834-1914), Thomas (1837-63) and Charles junior (1840-1916) who diversified their business interests (thanks mainly to credits given them by the Holts and Rathbones) by commencing the import of leather from America in 1857, and founding their steamship service to Brazil in 1865. By 1900 the Booth Line had outstripped, extinguished or bought out its rivals in both Continents⁽⁸⁶⁾.

It was during the thirty years following 1790 that the Unitarian community in Liverpool received its most considerable accession of strength from sharp-witted and hard-headed businessmen coming to the town to make their fortunes in commerce or one of its ancillary branches. Without the new arrivals of this period indeed it is doubtful whether the Unitarians would ever have become a significant factor in civic life at all. George Lissant Cox for example, glass manufacturer and later a general merchant, arrived in the town in 1798 from Nottingham, having recently been expelled from the Baptists for 'deism', and quickly established a family business with help from the Jevons and Yates, and a judicious marriage alliance with the Holt family⁽⁸⁷⁾. Thomas Bolton arrived in Liverpool from north Lancashire about the same time, quickly abandoned his family's Calvinism, married the daughter of the Rev. Robert Lewin, and set up as a merchant on his own account⁽⁸⁸⁾. Joseph Hancox hastened to Liverpool when his

father's Birmingham iron works failed in the 1790s, and found it easy through the good offices of the Paradise Street seatholders to set himself up as a corn merchant⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Robert Musgrove, cotton-broker, who died in 1835⁽⁹⁰⁾ arrived at the same time and likewise built up a thriving business from practically nothing. Hugh Jones, one of the very few Liverpool Unitarians who came from Wales (his father was a landowner and captain of militia in Denbighshire) came to Liverpool in 1810, married the daughter of Benjamin Heywood, and rose to a partnership in the Heywood Bank in 1813⁽⁹¹⁾. Charles Holland moved in from Knutsford at the same time, and promoted various trading ventures in South America, and later railway companies, as well as becoming the principal founder of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. The family eventually settled down as junior partners in Lamport and Holt.

The Bowring family, though Charles Tricks and his son W.B. Bowring did not permanently remove to Liverpool from their Newfoundland home till 1837, had long been represented in the town and the genesis of the great nineteenth century firm of C.T. Bowring and Co., Newfoundland merchants, shipowners and underwriters, antedates their arrival by at least thirty years⁽⁹²⁾.

Names of even greater significance than the Bowrings however first appear in the local records of this period, for it is in the same war years that the Jevons, Holt, Crompton and Rathbone families all take their honoured place in the ranks of Liverpool Unitarianism. Thomas Jevons, the son of a Staffordshire nail-maker, set up on his own account in Liverpool in 1798 as an iron-merchant, and is claimed by some to have constructed the first iron boat to sail successfully. He married a daughter of William Roscoe, but the firm failed in 1848, fortunately perhaps, for it liberated the talents of Thomas, son of William Stanley, for the wider world of metaphysical speculation, of which science he became the leading English exponent⁽⁹³⁾. Thereafter the family name was preserved locally in Jevons and Co., iron and tinplate merchants, whose senior director, Henry Jevons, died in 1914, and Jevons, Ryley and Jevons, solicitors.

Peter Crompton M.D. came to Liverpool from Derby where his family were brewers, and settled in Eaton House, Wavertree, in 1798. His wife, Mary, the friend of the poet Coleridge, bore him five rather sickly sons, Edward, Charles, Stamford, Albert and Henry, who shared their father's

considerable fortune when he died in 1833. Only one of these, Sir Charles, the lawyer, lived to any age and attained distinction. He in any case played very little part in Liverpool life⁽⁹⁴⁾, but his son, Albert, (died 1908) returned to his native town, became a partner in the Ocean Steamship Co., and like his brother, Henry, passed through a brief Anglican phase into Positivism and Socialism. The Cromptons had always been regarded in Liverpool as a rather exotic importation, and their founding and support of the ill-fated Positivist cause in the town confirmed its inhabitants' suspicions of their inbred eccentricity.⁽⁹⁵⁾

George Holt removed from Rochdale, where his father had been a dyer, to Liverpool in 1807. A Baptist by upbringing he had at first been apprenticed to Mr Samuel Hope and worshipped in Byrom Street chapel, but on his marriage to Miss Emma Durning in 1820 he became a Unitarian⁽⁹⁶⁾. In 1823 he struck out on his own as a cotton broker, and in 1845 founded, together with W.J. Lamport, a steamship line to tap the imperfectly developed South American and West Indian trades. In 1865 Lamport, together with George Holt's two sons, George and Robert Durning, founded the Ocean Steamship Co. to trade with China. The engineering genius of Alfred Holt and the winsome personality of Robert Durning soon built up the business to take its place as one of the 'big three' shipping firms (the others being the Rathbones and Booths) under Unitarian control⁽⁹⁷⁾.

The Rathbones were the principal, but by no means the only family to progress from orthodoxy to Unitarianism at this time. William Rathbone IV died in 1809, and his business was inherited by his son, William Rathbone V (1787-1868) who saw it become increasingly concentrated on the American cotton trade. Between 1840 and 1860 a strange mixture of calculated expediency and outraged moral principle led to the slow abandonment of the cotton trade and to the diversification of the company's interests into the China tea and new American trades as well as into the commission business. By the early 1870s under the direction of William Rathbone VI (1819-1902) and S.G. Rathbone (1821-1903) the family firm ranked as one of the leading commercial houses of the port.

The 1820s saw no slackening off in the constant appearance of new faces in the congregations at Paradise and Renshaw Streets, for in this decade the Finchs, Gaskells, Rawdons, Boults, Mellys and the lonely figure of W.J. Lamport all appear on the local scene. John Finch, a Unitarian from Dudley, entered the service of Irwin and Sons, iron merchants

of Liverpool in 1818 as a traveller, became a partner in the firm of Roscoe and Mather in 1827, and set up his own concern, Finch & Son, a few years later. Finch, temperance advocate, Owenite and genial eccentric, eventually ruined himself with his co-operative venture at the Windsor Iron Foundry in the 1850s, but not before his incurable millenarianism had added one of its most egregious elements to local Unitarian society⁽⁹⁸⁾.

Holbrook Gaskell, born in Warrington in 1813, was apprenticed to Yates and Cox, iron merchants, in 1828, and proceeded to found Gaskell, Deacon and Co., the great alkali concern, later amalgamated with the United Alkali Co. He acquired publishing and colliery interests also, and died in 1909, worth £433,000. Christopher Rawdon, born in Halifax in 1780 and for many years representative of his father's wool firm in Portugal, removed to Liverpool in 1821 where he set up as a general merchant and became first chairman of the directors of the Liverpool Commercial Bank. He died in 1858 and is chiefly remembered in Unitarian circles today as the founder of a fund to augment the stipends of their poor ministers⁽⁹⁹⁾.

The Boultts hailed originally from Wrexham and were the scions of a very old Presbyterian family. Francis Boult senior who died in 1848 founded the company of merchants and shipowners which bore his name in 1829, and broke into the profitable American trade four years later. By 1850 his son (another Francis) was one of the greatest shipowners in Liverpool, though before his death in 1886 he saw his interests decline almost to nothing, and his fortune melt away. Luckily all Francis Boult's sons did not follow their eldest brother in this illstarred enterprise. Swinton Boult commenced life in Liverpool as an insurance agent, and founded the Liverpool Fire Office in 1836 which grew into the Liverpool and London Insurance Co in 1848 and the Liverpool, London and Globe a few years later. Boult's company which by this time had absorbed more than thirty other concerns soon became the largest fire insurance office in the world,⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. Meanwhile Peter S. Boult (died 1896) became a cotton broker in the firm of Shand, Higson and Co. and was one of the few members of the family to conform⁽¹⁰¹⁾, whilst Joseph Boult (died 1894) devoted his life principally to literary and artistic pursuits.

The first of the two great Liverpool Unitarian families of Swiss origin arrived in Liverpool in 1824. André Melly, born in Geneva in 1802,

was the son of a Swiss merchant who had been a 'patriot' at the time of the French Revolution. André, inheriting his father's radicalism, had helped the Italian carbonari and had left the country on account of pressure from the Austrian government in 1822. He settled in Liverpool two years later as agent of the House of Grabon which dealt in Egyptian cotton. (He also appears, oddly enough, to have acted as Mehemet Ali's sole diplomatic representative in England). Patronized by the Rathbones and by Huskisson who obtained naturalization for him, he became a partner with the Unitarian Gregg family in their cotton business at Bury, but also established the commission house of Melly, Prevost and Co. in Liverpool in 1827. Melly's eldest son, Charles Pierre (who amongst all his other achievements introduced the pole method of lighting gas lamps into England from his native Geneva) inherited the family mercantile business which became known as Melly, Romilly and Co., and later as Melly, Forget and Co., cotton merchants, whilst his younger brother George, launched out on his own as a cotton broker, and became one of the leading mercantile and political figures of the town⁽¹⁰²⁾.

Finally W.J. Lamport, born in Lancaster where his father was Unitarian minister in 1815, came to Liverpool in 1829 as an apprentice to Gibbs, Bright and Co. Lamport and Holt was founded in 1845 and the senior partner died a bachelor in 1874. He was one of the quietest and most withdrawn of all these Unitarian business men and about his life very little is accurately known.

The influx of new families was slackening markedly by the 1830s. Henry Tate, born in Chorley in 1819 where his father was a Unitarian minister, came to Liverpool in 1832 as an apprentice to his brother, a grocer. Tate built up a network of grocery shops, but in 1859 became a partner of John Wright and Co., sugar refiners, a company which was dissolved ten years later. Tate had by this time already opened his own refinery under the title of Henry Tate and Co. The subsequent history of this firm in its Liverpool and London Branches is one of the most remarkable success stories of Victorian commercial history⁽¹⁰³⁾.

The Rev. John Brunner, a Swiss clergyman and friend of the Mellys, opened his school in Everton in 1832. His two sons, John and Joseph, entered the firm of John Hitchinson and Co. of Widnes, alkali manufacturers, and in 1873 went into partnership with Ludwig Mond, out of which arose the great alkali works at Northwich. Though their business interests

lay outside the city, both brothers resided in Liverpool and took a deep interest in its affairs.

H.W. Meade-King came to Liverpool from Taunton at the same time as John Brunner. He established the firm of Meade-King and Co., American merchants, which however he dissolved in 1869, devoting the rest of his life to banking, becoming a director of both the National Bank of Liverpool and of Parr's Banking Company.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Lastly, C.E. Rawlins, smalt and ultramarine manufacturer with works at Rainhill, joined the Unitarian body, as has been noted, in 1839. Undoubtedly this factor improved both his commercial and social prospects which would hardly have been furthered had he remained among the Free Methodists⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

By the 1850s 'our old families' as the local newspapers generally dubbed the Unitarian circle had nearly all established themselves in the town. The great merchants were powerfully entrenched in local society, while they or their sons cultivated those ancillary services, banking, sugar-refining, insurance, railway promotion, which were becoming increasingly necessary as the trade of the port expanded. The now time-honoured practice of new aspirants for wealth and honour attaching themselves to the two historic chapels and securing apprenticeships, clerical posts or junior partnerships in the great firms had now reached its height; the Gairs had attached themselves to and intermarried with the Rathbones, the Archers had entered the employ of the Thornleys, C.W. Jones, son of the Rev. Noah Jones, minister at Gateacre, was about to join Lamport and Holt, and C.G. Mott, through his connection with Henry Booth, had become a director of the L.N.W. and several other railway companies. Henceforth any newcomers who appear among the Unitarians will have difficulty in forcing themselves into the company of the elite, and will probably like James Samuelson, the seed crusher and Socialist pioneer, who joined the Unitarians in 1857, gravitate to one or other of the chapels through intellectual conviction alone⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Social divisions were hardening, and the prospect of a clannish oligarchy emerging among the leading families was always present from the mid-century onwards.

The Elite As Philanthropists

The Unitarians were not as other religionists. They bore the burden of their beliefs like the latter-day Puritans they were, and the wealthier they became the more they were tormented by doubts and uncertainties as to the rightness of what they were doing. They were desperately worried

about the city which gave them their economic power, and grew rich almost against their will. James Currie, like Roscoe, felt depressed that he was surrounded in Liverpool by "the overgrown votaries of wealth, the worshippers of power and the insolence of office"⁽¹⁰⁷⁾, and the Rathbones felt bound to apologise that they lived in a community given over to selfish opulence and senseless speculation⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. Inevitably too they worried about their own position vis-a-vis such a society. Currie declared that he would not give "three ships of a louse for what is called opulence", but became nevertheless the leading physician on Merseyside⁽¹⁰⁹⁾, whilst William Rathbone VI's attitude towards wealth was even more emphatic. His feeling was, he wrote to his wife in 1869, that when a man gets over £200,000, "he is too rich for the kingdom of heaven"⁽¹¹⁰⁾. "I feel," he wrote two years later, "intense discontent with myself and the class of educated men above the pinch of poverty. It would be so easy to make the world so different"⁽¹¹¹⁾. 'Pecuniary paralysis' was his favourite description of the basic weakness of his fellow merchants⁽¹¹²⁾ whose rates he as a politician tried to double or treble for no other reason than to force them to take a more intelligent interest in local affairs. The Unitarians' response to the poverty and wretchedness around them took its best-known form in the Domestic Mission experiment of the 1830s, but long before this they had both through personal efforts⁽¹¹³⁾ and through subsidising others been trying to alleviate the burden of suffering in many ways.

-Their philanthropic work began indeed very early, and so did the tradition of secret giving by which it was always surrounded. The story of William Rathbone V engaged in conversation with a fellow merchant in a crowded railway compartment about a subject of social distress, and waiting the opportunity of the train's entering a tunnel before pressing £5 notes into the other's palm epitomises their whole approach to charity, or 'doing good by stealth' as the Holts always termed it.

At the very start of our period following the inspiration of Dr Currie, the relief they provided was almost wholly of a medical sort. Currie who became physician to the Liverpool Infirmary in 1786 has to his credit not merely the promotion of the Liverpool Lunatic Asylum (1790) and the Fever Hospital (1806) and, together with Roscoe, the School for the Blind⁽¹¹⁴⁾ but commenced with Dr Crompton (whose joy it was to 'physik the poor gratis') the tradition of Unitarian support for the numerous medical institutions of

the town, without which they could never have survived at any period during the ensuing century.

In the 1830s it was the District Provident Society (founded in 1829) which caught the imagination of the Unitarians who now had surplus wealth over and above that which they were donating to the medical charities. Mr Richard Rathbone, and his brother, William V, were the leading and most generous promoters of this body which demanded not merely the occasional cheque but a great deal of door-to-door work in which many Unitarian families, especially the Rathbones, were happy to engage. It also answered to the contemporary Tuckerman emphasis on the need for personal contacts between the rich and the poor. Not all the wealthy classes of England, the Liverpool Unitarians were anxious to show, subscribed to the harsh philosophy of the 1834 Poor Law Act⁽¹¹⁵⁾.

The D.P.S. was hardly underway however when another social need presented itself. The cholera epidemic of 1832 among many other unexpected results necessitated the disinfection of the clothes of its victims and out of the work begun by Kitty Wilkinson grew the public baths and washhouses movement, whose chief sponsors were again the Rathbone brothers⁽¹¹⁶⁾. Frederick Street Baths and the others built by private Charity were eventually taken over by the Corporation but not before the example set by the Rathbones had inspired their fellow Unitarians to go and do likewise: Woolton Public Baths were for example erected by Holbrook Gaskell a little later.

The 1850s and 60s witnessed the full flowering of the Rathbones' charitable impulse. In 1857 William Rathbone VI was seriously ill through overwork and depressed by the recent death of his wife. As a splendid gesture, inspired by his gratitude to the family nurse, Rathbone secured and supported a nurse who would visit the poor of a particular district in their own homes. 'District Nursing' at once revealed to him an awful and unsuspected social need: Rathbone was prepared to furnish several more nurses for the work, but could find no Training Institute to supply them: accordingly he founded entirely at his own expense the Liverpool Training School and Home For Nurses and by 1865 had the satisfaction of seeing the town divided into eighteen areas for District Nursing purposes, each under the supervision of a trained, competent nurse. District Nursing which some critics with perhaps just an element of truth asserted was not only a magnificent philanthropic idea but a splendid opportunity

for the bored middle-class Unitarian ladies to have something to do⁽¹¹⁷⁾ is far better known than Rathbone's extension of the scheme to the workhouses of the town a little later⁽¹¹⁸⁾.

Elected to the Select Vestry and with the support of the dynamic Miss Agnes Jones to whom he had entrusted control over the Day Nursing scheme, Rathbone drew up a blueprint for sweeping reforms in pauper nursing and undertook to bear the first three years' expense himself. Once again he was brilliantly successful in cutting through the slothful incompetence of this most notorious of local public bodies; a staff of trained nurses was engaged for workhouse service, and fifty-six pauper women 'of the better sort' were selected as their assistants.

By this date philanthropic activities were widespread throughout all the great Unitarian families of the town. George Melly and George Holt had together founded a private reformatory for boys in Mason Street in 1857, an institution which for those days was run on remarkably enlightened lines⁽¹¹⁹⁾. Meanwhile George Melly's colourful and eccentric brother, Charles Pierre, had earned himself the soubriquet 'Water-fountain Melly' by introducing these useful innovations into Liverpool (and indeed into England) in 1852. Regarded as somewhat of a joke in some circles, Melly was taken seriously enough to be asked to read a paper on his fountains to the Social Science Congress in 1858, by which date he had begun another crusade which for some reason aroused fierce opposition against him, the provision of way-side seats in large cities⁽¹²⁰⁾.

In the early 1860s however the Unitarians' energies were taken up by the needs of the Lancashire cotton towns for relief consequent on the American Civil War. Rathbone and Charles Melly were the Liverpool Organisers of the relief fund, and fixed the target for the town at £100,000. Despite the involvement of both men in the work of extending to other cities the social amenities they had introduced into Liverpool, and the opposition of the town in general to the northern cause, this large sum was oversubscribed, and the surplus used to establish a Convalescent Home in Woolton⁽¹²¹⁾.

It was in the 1850s and 60s also that the Unitarian passion for philanthropy had communicated itself to the middle-class adherents of the other denominations, and the town was threatened with a deluge of philanthropic institutions with their attendant evils of overlapping and fraud. This was very offensive to the tidy mind of William Rathbone VI

who in his enthusiasm for planning often declared that he must seem like a socialist⁽¹²²⁾. Accordingly, largely at his instigation the Central Relief Society was set up in 1863 to co-ordinate the activities of all the town's charitable bodies, and introduce the principle of planning into local philanthropy. Four years later, in his book 'Social Duties' Rathbone strove to vindicate this approach as against the indiscriminate principle under the convenient formula, Method Versus Muddle.

New avenues to social service were however appearing all the time, and the local Unitarian families became more, not less, conspicuous for the generosity of their giving as time went on. J.H. Thom's introduction of Hospital Sunday collections seems for example to have directed attention to the needs of the chronically sick. Among other benefactions Henry Tate in the 1870s gave the Hahnemann Hospital to Liverpool, and Alfred Booth rebuilt St. Paul's Eye Hospital.

Then alongside other and half-forgotten achievements - James Samuelson's founding the Liverpool Summer Camp for Girls in 1874, or Alfred Booth's pioneering the first local branch of the R.S.P.C.A. in 1895 to improve conditions on the Irish cattle boats⁽¹²³⁾, or H.W. Meade-King's work for the preservation of public footpaths⁽¹²⁴⁾, there came the Unitarians' most lasting civic memorial, the provision of public parks to act as the 'lungs' of a teeming city. Here the Yates family were the pioneers, and R.V. Yates' purchase of Princes Park from the Earl of Sefton in 1843 was followed by its gift to the town six years later⁽¹²⁵⁾. C.P. Melly donated his first public playground, that in Smithdown Lane, equipped with a gym and a full-time gymnast who was in Melly's employ, in 1858, to be followed by similar provisions in Wavertree Park (1860) and Kirkdale (1861) (the future Stanley Park). The land secured from Lord Sefton in 1862 and opened the same year as Sefton Playground became, as is well known, the nucleus of Sefton Park to whose acquisition for the town Melly devoted much of his energy⁽¹²⁶⁾. The Wavertree 'Mystery' was donated with characteristic self-effacement by Philip Holt in 1895, and finally the Roby Hall estate (later renamed Bowring Park) was handed over to the city by W.B. Bowring in 1907.

That the people of Liverpool came to enjoy spatial freedom to an extent unparalleled in other cities is due almost entirely to this handful of earnest seekers for spiritual freedom whose vision of the good life embraced the whole community in which their sphere of labour lay.

The Elite As Educationalists

This was nowhere more conspicuous than in the realm of education. From the very start the Unitarians had a definite and enlightened view of this subject, and as early as 1800 Currie was declaring that education's 'great secret' 'was to teach the child to teach itself' ⁽¹²⁷⁾, while even during the Napoleonic War period concerts and the opera were being regarded as necessary adjuncts to the education of any Unitarian child ⁽¹²⁸⁾

These ideas naturally found full expression in the schools which the Unitarian families established and supported for their own children. In the early 19th century there were three such: Dr Shepherd's at Gateacre, known as the 'Nook' where the young Gaskells, Yates and Roscoes received their schooling, but which, mainly because Shepherd was such a terrifying personage to young children, was probably the least successful of the three ⁽¹²⁹⁾, a Pestalozzian establishment run by a Mr Voelker in Everton where the Ashtons, Holts and Heywoods secured the most liberal education available in the Liverpool of their day, and the Rev. John Brunner's school, also in Everton and also run on Pestalozzian principles where the Brunner children themselves, the Mellys and the Booths acquired their taste for Chemistry, Physics, French and German ⁽¹³⁰⁾. From these local academies Unitarian boys, from the mid-century, were proceeding to public schools, the Cromptons for example to Harrow, though the favourite was naturally Arnold's Rugby. Here they were of course generally lost to Unitarianism, although very few were won for the Anglican church, despite the fact that most succumbed to pressure and were confirmed (the majority in fact in adult life became unattached theists). Finally a Continental Tour would round off the young Unitarian's education, giving him a useful acquaintance with foreign trading conditions as well as with European cultural and social institutions.

As philanthropists the Unitarians were naturally anxious to extend the benefits of education to the community at large. In the year 1788 for example they are found taking the initiative in a plea for a genuine municipal educational system ⁽¹³¹⁾, though Liverpool was not yet prepared for such advanced notions. Hence arose the Unitarians' own contribution to public education.

As early as 1716 the Presbyterian congregations had combined to establish a school for the poor, about which nothing is known, but it was not till the 1790s that a serious and permanent effort was made.

The first free school in Liverpool was in fact erected by Benn's Garden Chapel in 1790. This valuable institution moved its location more than once and came eventually to cater for children of all ages. Only in the later 19th century did it cease to function, the boys' side being given up in 1870, the infants' in 1880, and the girls' in 1901⁽¹³²⁾.

Not to be outdone the Paradise Street congregation established a charity school behind their chapel in Manesty Lane in 1792. Supported entirely by Unitarians it nevertheless explicitly rejected any proselytising aims, and special provision was made for the religious instruction of orthodox children by their own clergy⁽¹³³⁾. Run on the monitorial system these schools were enlarged several times. Subsequently transferred to Hope Street in 1848 they were likewise handed over to the Liverpool School Board in 1870.

Finally in 1815 the Rev. John Yates established largely at his own expense the Harrington schools for children of all denominations⁽¹³⁴⁾; largely to supplement the work of Toxteth Park School which had had a continuous existence since at least 1625 but which the chapel had inexplicably allowed to fall into alien hands in the early 1830s⁽¹³⁵⁾.

Even with all this activity however the ideal of 1788, of a network of municipal schools, remained the ultimate goal of most Unitarians, and by the 1820s their conviction was receiving added support from various quarters. They were for example greatly influenced by the national debate, and in 1820 Dr Shepherd declared himself determined to see through Brougham's Education Bill which would have provided such a system, even though he 'stood almost alone among my Dissenting bretheren'⁽¹³⁶⁾ who feared the bill's concessions to the Anglican Church. Owenite influences were powerful in Liverpool too, particularly among the Rathbones with whom Owen "in the days when he was rational and practical" was often invited to stay⁽¹³⁷⁾. Even Henry Booth, the sternest and most utilitarian of all the Liverpool Unitarians, enthused when it came to the provision of educational facilities to teach the working classes 'honest industry and practical self-control'⁽¹³⁸⁾. The consequence of all these various pressures was the Hibernian Schools experiment. These schools, established by the 'Benevolent Society of St. Patrick' as early as 1807⁽¹³⁹⁾ were in the 1820s deliberately fostered by the Rathbones, their chief supporters, as an example to the town of how children of different faiths could be educated under the same roof. It was a remarkable venture, carried through

with astonishing single-mindedness amidst a thick cloud of misunderstanding and abuse - few, except his coreligionists, could understand why William Rathbone V, when Anglican support began to wane, should go down to the school to instruct Anglican children in the Catechism himself!

Though the Liverpool Hibernian Schools were to attract national interest in the 1830s, a far more lasting Unitarian achievement was the establishment of a local branch of the Mechanics Institute, but that the institution which later grew into the Liverpool Institute and Blackburn House was founded and supported almost entirely through the vision and generosity of the Holt brothers is a fact of local history too well-known for further comment. What is not so generally recognized however is that in the 1830s and 40s the Liverpool Mechanics Institute was not the only Unitarian-inspired venture of this kind. There was the short-lived Brougham Institute which served a similar function and whose chief promotor was C.E. Rawlins and the Woolton Mechanics Institute founded by Dr. Shepherd and the Gateacre Unitarians in 1846⁽¹⁴⁰⁾.

On two occasions in the 19th century the radical elite held sufficient political power to be able to translate their ideals into realities. From 1835-41 William Rathbone V known locally as the 'Educationalist' tried to base municipal policy on his Hibernian schools idea; in the early 70s S.G. Rathbone as chairman of the Liverpool School Board was able to provide the city with an excellent elementary schools system with a minimum of sectarian strife. But these events belong more fittingly to our final chapter. Here it should be noted that by the 1860s and 70s the Unitarians had acquired an expertise in educational matters which was nationally recognised. W.E. Forster for example before framing his famous Bill in 1870 sought the advice of Mrs William Rathbone⁽¹⁴¹⁾. Another member of the family, Mr P. H. Rathbone, travelled to America as a member of the Moseley Commission, whilst a third, Mr S. G. Rathbone, was not only referred to by Mundella as the country's 'first expert' on elementary education, but gave such distinction to the Liverpool School Board that he was invited to serve on the Education Commission of 1881, in which capacity he earned the enthusiastic praises of Lord Cross⁽¹⁴²⁾.

By this date the Unitarians were within sight of their educational goal. Only one more institution was now lacking: a local university. and it was characteristic of William Rathbone VI that on hearing of an electoral defeat he should have exclaimed, 'good....now we will have the college' (143).

The original idea of the University was not however his, nor that of Charles Beard to whom this distinction is usually given (144), nor even is it traceable to an address by Bishop Lightfoot on a university in a mercantile city which led the Unitarian families to pledge between them £100,000 for its establishment. Several letters of the Rev. J. H. Thom now preserved in the Rathbone papers show the idea of a 'school of higher science' germinating as early as the 1850s, (145) though it was only pressure from Rathbone and Beard which compelled the establishment of a Joint Commission to investigate the project in 1877 (146). From that point onwards the Unitarian impact on the new foundation was profound, and was seen not least in the explicit exclusion of a faculty of theology, which led to fierce denunciation of the 'godless' scheme by the town's Evangelical clergy. When the University College was opened in 1882, and admitted as a constituent college of the Victoria University in 1884, the Unitarians had not only been the mainstay of the building fund, but had endowed several professorships, Brunner the chair of Economics, P. H. Rathbone the Roscoe Chair of Art, G. Holt the Chair of Physiology, while W. A. Jevons had secured a school of Law, and Henry Tate had given over £30,000 for the building of a library. Nor should we overlook P.H. Rathbone's founding of the Municipal School of Architecture and Fine Arts which, later incorporated into the University, sprouted in the early 20th century a department of Civic Design which took the lead in modern town planning, or Edward Rathbone's sponsoring in 1886 a curriculum of business studies, the first such venture in the Kingdom. If the University was the last of the Unitarians' major educational achievements, it was by no means the meanest.

The Elite As Employers

As employers of labour the Unitarian elite was distinguished by an attitude of enlightened responsibility which is rather different from the fussy paternalism of the Quakers in other towns and cities.

These Liverpool men disliked intensely the commercial speculation and profiteering which they beheld all around them. William Rathbone V was ashamed to confess that he lived in Liverpool, a town so notorious for this acquisitive spirit⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. 'Money-grubbing' was the evil the Rathbones feared most of all; 'grief and debauchery', they believed, followed every burst of speculative mania⁽¹⁴⁸⁾, while the intense caution and over-strict probity of the Holt brothers provoked their fellow China merchants to such an extent that John Swire, chairman of the China Conference, resigned, protesting against their intransigence⁽¹⁴⁹⁾.

A second, and perhaps more surprising, feature of their business ethics was their approval of monopolistic practice which they welcomed as providing them with the greatest possible challenge to their commercial uprightness, and as constituting a kind of trust which they could exercise on behalf of others. (The same spirit of course often prevailed in their philanthropic activities also). The Booths welcomed monopoly for just these reasons⁽¹⁵⁰⁾, while Alfred Holt objected to his brother Philip joining the 'Conference system' (i.e. an agreement among competing firms to fix charges and conditions of employment) only because their fellow merchants were not able to share this singular outlook. Their hostility towards admitting limited liability into their company organization sprang from a similar conviction that this too would involve the abandonment of pristine high standards at the behest of grasping shareholders.

A third quality they displayed was a complete freedom from social prejudice, the consequences of which were often rather surprising. Paul Cufee, the Rathbones' negro captain, dined at Greenbank like the rest, often to the embarrassment of his fellow guests⁽¹⁵¹⁾. Assisting some of his employees to found the Liverpool Operative Trades Hall, Charles Booth spoke for most Liverpool Unitarians when he declared, 'I like the men one gets amongst this way; they have a sort of charm about them, being much more simple-minded and unsophisticated than most of us'⁽¹⁵²⁾. The Holts, like the Rathbones, brought all their masters into the family circle, and gave them the opportunity to purchase stock in the Line⁽¹⁵³⁾. Meanwhile the work done on behalf of the nascent Trades Union movement by some of the more prominent Liverpool Unitarians led to P. H. Rathbone's being included along with Ludlow,

Hughes and Maurice on the committee to enquire into Trade Unions in 1857, and to the young James Samuelson's abandoning his seed-crushing business to study for the bar, the better to equip him in defending Trades Union rights in legal disputes with employers.⁽⁻¹⁵⁴⁾

It is difficult to judge the Unitarians as employers of labour too accurately, as so few were factory owners, and so many had interests in shipping lines where conditions of work (especially the prevalence of casual labour) did not really lend themselves to the type of social concern which these men were anxious to display. Two of them who did own factories established conditions and provided amenities which were noteworthy and highly exceptional for their day. Sir John Brunner at both Widnes and Northwich was regarded as a model employer, both for his encouragement of profit-sharing, and his private scheme of health insurance; C.E. Rawlins at Rainhill built dwelling houses, a gym and a school for the benefit of his workmen, and was regarded as one of the most enlightened manufacturers of Souch-West Lancashire.

The merchants strove in their very dissimilar sphere for like ends. The Booths who may be regarded as typical of their class never abandoned their affection for the intimacy and friendliness of the 18th century counting house, even when their business grew to vast proportions. Capital and Labour were for them 'a team working together'. The duties of the former were to plan efficiently, employ the best men available (even for the lower deck), pay well, grant financial inducements, good holidays and bonuses plus security of employment (even, wherever possible, to unskilled labour), and above all, to train apprentices thoroughly and provide adequate welfare services (a duty generally delegated to the Booth ladies). In face of all this the duties of the employees were simply defined as acceptance of agreed rates of remuneration and unswerving loyalty to the company's interests⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. The Holts' and Rathbones' aims were parallel, though they were even more dogmatic in their avoidance of anything which might endanger the company's modest prosperity (which was all they sought), even such generally accepted mercantile practices as 'futures' and 'arrivals'⁽¹⁵⁶⁾. While their businesses remained small and compact these were not ignoble ideals for the Unitarian employers to pursue. It was only later that it came to be realised that such old-fashioned concern might actually hamper efficiency and

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hold back not only profits but wage rates also. But even in the 60s and 70s this unpleasant truth had still to obtrude itself.

The one regret which the elite as employers always entertained was that for all their efforts they were unable to do anything to improve the status and conditions of the dock labourer. William Rathbone VI regarded this as the greatest failure of his life⁽¹⁵⁷⁾, and even though in 1912 Lawrence D. Holt and Charles Booth established through the mediation of Lord Derby, and with the support of Sexton, the dockers' leader, the Clearing House scheme, the most successful attempt yet made to halt the endemic discontent at the docks, and in the long run the turning-point of labour relations in the port of Liverpool, their efforts came too late to close the chapter of class conflict which a century of neglect had produced in Dockland⁽¹⁵⁸⁾.

The Elite As Cultural Leaders

William Rathbone IV spent a busy lifetime in politics, industry and philanthropy, yet nevertheless rose early to digest Latin before breakfast, and went to bed late, having spent an hour or so studying French or reading Malthus or the Scotch economists⁽¹⁵⁹⁾. His quest for self-improvement is characteristic of the religious sect to which he latterly belonged.

At the beginning of our period the Liverpool Jacobins, as radical in political sentiment as they were in religious thought, dominate not only the political but the cultural life of the town also. When they first began to meet as a definite intellectual coterie is difficult to determine. As early as 1758 the Presbyterians had set up the first circulating library in Liverpool⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ and in 1773 Roscoe and others had established a Liverpool society for encouraging Painting and Design⁽¹⁶¹⁾. But about 1780 Currie and Roscoe founded the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society which, though it failed in 1783, may be regarded as the parent of all the learned societies which later flourished in the town⁽¹⁶²⁾. By 1785 indeed Currie, Shepherd, Yates, Rathbone, Roscoe, Rutter (the Quaker), and Smyth (the radical Anglican and Cambridge don) were meeting in one another's houses as the Literary Society, a body which continued to flourish till 1792 when it was dissolved amidst the turmoil of the anti-Jacobin scare in the town⁽¹⁶³⁾. By this date however the same group of intellectuals had launched other ventures: the Athenaeum in 1797, built largely through the beneficence of Unitarian merchants

such as Thomas Fletcher⁽¹⁶⁴⁾, and often cited by proud Liverpuddlians as proof of the cultural tastes of their town⁽¹⁶⁵⁾; the Liverpool Union News Room in 1801; the Botanic Gardens, largely the work of Roscoe, and the Theatre in 1802⁽¹⁶⁶⁾. Once anti-Jacobin passions had died down after the death of Pitt there was a renewed, and this time successful attempt on the part of the same group, by this time largely middle-aged or elderly, to launch a Literary and Philosophical Society in 1812. Their final endeavour which again became a permanent feature of the town's cultural life was the Royal Institution (1814), of which Roscoe and A.B. Heywood were the leading promoters.

These institutions served as a common forum for intellectual improvement, observation and debate, but the Liverpool 'Jacobins' aspired also to be authors in their own right, even though, as they admitted they felt somewhat ill-at-ease in being "reading men in an almost non-reading community"⁽¹⁶⁷⁾, cursed their provincial isolation⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ from the main centres of taste and learning, and apologised to all their friends that works with pretensions to literary value and scholarship should be appearing from the Liverpool press⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

Towering above all their other achievements is of course Currie's editing of Burns' works, and his introducing the hitherto obscure Scots poet to a wider audience. This literary labour rather than his ephemeral political pamphlets (he was a thoroughgoing Utilitarian who unlike Roscoe rejected natural rights altogether and believed that 'all government will finally be reduced to the principle of utility'⁽¹⁷⁰⁾) secures him his niche in the literary history of England. Roscoe is far more difficult to judge. His poetry only occasionally rises above the pedestrian⁽¹⁷¹⁾; it is his historical biographies of renaissance characters, his life Lorenzo (1796) and of Leo X (1805), which, together with Shepherd's Life of Poggio (1802) are the chief claim of these two men to academic distinction⁽¹⁷²⁾.

The 'Lives' served to introduce a large number of English readers to a period of history virtually unknown outside very narrow academic circles, as well as conferring honour on the authors themselves. There lies however at the heart of this literary endeavour a basic contradiction which explains much of the falsity of Roscoe's position.

On his own admission he turned to renaissance Italy because shocked by the vileness and cultural poverty of Liverpool life he believed that here he found a natural alliance between wealth, culture and a quest for beauty. At the same time he realised the dubious means by which the Medici and Dorias obtained and retained their autocratic power, means which were naturally repugnant to his democratic soul. Hence he could in almost the same breath invoke the example of 15th century Florence as an inspiration for what Liverpool might become, and deny the relevance of his historical writing altogether, 'a tale of other times bearing but little on the momentous occurrences of the present day' ⁽¹⁷³⁾. For Roscoe the problem of the use of history had been raised in an acute and apparently unanswerable form ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast between these Liverpool radicals who had the souls and vision of poets and, say, the scientifically oriented Lunar Society of Birmingham which shared a similar religious background and a like political idealism. The differences however were even deeper than have appeared hitherto. The Birmingham men for example were fascinated by invention, those of Liverpool by natural beauty, scenic and animal. Above all the hyper-sensitive Liverpool romantics could share neither Priestley's optimism nor his harsh philosophical dogmas. They were alternately elated and depressed, could delight with Roscoe in the rustic delights of Dingle Bank or with Currie in the splendour of his native Highlands or, Job-like, curse the age in which they were born. 'What is the matter with this crazy old earth on which we crawl?' exclaimed Roscoe to Rathbone in 1797 ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. It was the incurable optimism and heady belief in human progress of men like Reid and Priestley which drove the disillusioned Currie from political speculation to biography, and even when commiserating with Priestley on his distress in 1791, he had perforce to disclaim 'many of your theological as well as your metaphysical dogmas' ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. It is the same Currie who, writing to Roscoe, penned what may be regarded as the epitaph of the Liverpool Jacobins, 'How clearly do the records of our times prove that human reason is a most imperfect instrument, and the human heart touched by pride, self-interest or bigotry a most callous and impenetrable thing' ⁽¹⁷⁷⁾. Liberal religion, as Martineau and Inge were later to demonstrate, has really no logical connection with belief in human progress or perfectability, and gives way to despair as easily as other

more orthodox forms⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

The ascendancy of this particular literary group came to an end about 1820, and was succeeded by a less fruitful period when the Unitarians of Liverpool devoted most of their time to socio-political pamphleteering, and which corresponds closely to the distinctive 'Unitarian' phase of their religious development. Three names in particular are outstanding in this activity, Ottiwell Wood, a merchant and advanced radical who in a series of articles to the local press campaigned against identifying existing social arrangements with the Divine Will⁽¹⁷⁹⁾, William Jevons who had studied at Glasgow University and who in 1827 wrote 'Systematic Morality', a book which bases a whole system of liberal economics on the teachings of the New Testament⁽¹⁸⁰⁾, and Henry Booth whose 'Moral Capability' which wrestled with the problem of free will and determinism appeared in 1814 and whose 'Thoughts on the Condition of the Poor' (1824) was a gloomy Malthusian tract. Of all the Liverpool Unitarians Booth approached most closely to the philosophy of the Manchester school (he had, after all, built the railway which linked the two towns), and amongst all his numerous pamphlets on railways, telegraphs, licensing, free trade and taxation, none is more revealing than 'Master and Man' (1853) wherein an intelligent Master controverts the arguments of a witless Man, and the philosophy 'Each man for himself' is successfully vindicated.

This was abhorrent to the whole Liverpool Unitarian tradition, and Booth was fortunately almost alone among them in falling victim to the current attraction of Benthamite economics. Even in these middle decades in fact when political and social engineering seemed all important, the cultural impetus of the Liverpool Jacobins was not entirely lost. Andre Melly for example was busy with his entymological works and his family gave to the world the fruits of their Egyptian explorations in the 'Lettres d'Egypte et de Nubie' and 'Khartoum and the Blue and White Niles' (1851). Christopher Rawdon pursued his Portuguese studies and translated the Lusiads for the benefit of his friends; the Yates children collected their magnificent libraries and private galleries, and the Rev. James junior became prominent in the Linnean and Geological Societies; above all the next generation of the Roscoes were making their reputations; William

Stanley whose poems express an utter detachment from the world and who translated Klopstock's Messiah, William Caldwell, the dreamy poet and over-fastidious contributor to the National Review whose political philosophy is nearer to that of Robert Lowe than to that of his own grandfather⁽¹⁸¹⁾ and who leapt to prominence when on aesthetic grounds he attacked the self-glorification of the British in the Great Exhibition of 1851 which he dubbed the 'Great Imposition',⁽¹⁸²⁾ and Henry, his father's biographer and author of 'Lives of Eminent British Lawyers'.

It was not however till the arrival on the local scene of Mr P. H. Rathbone that the spirit and ideals of Roscoe found fresh embodiment. Philip, the wild and perverse genius of the Liverpool Unitarians, who annoyed his Catholic friends by talk of St. Peter's 'peasant soul', and his liberal colleagues by designating the French as 'the most vulgar of all revolutions', was an aesthetic dilettante with an amazing capacity for translating his ideals into action. He failed of course in his professed aims of making every stone of Liverpool 'a sculptured song', or turning his fellow merchants into the 'Medici and Doyias' of 19th century England. He failed too to transform Liverpool into something resembling Hausmann's Paris, and to revive local crafts such as pottery⁽¹⁸³⁾. He did however splendid work for the study of fine arts at the University, he planned the architecture of St. George's Hall⁽¹⁸⁴⁾, introduced the French Impressionists to Liverpool (and possibly to England - he was a familiar figure in Chelsea art circles), and started the Autumn Exhibition of Pictures at the Walker Art Gallery in 1870. A lover of High Church ritual, though a devout Unitarian⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Rathbone was thus regarded alternately as a joke, an embarrassment, and an ornament to the city where his spare, aesthetic figure was one of the familiar sights of the day.

By the 1870s and 80s most of the prominent Unitarians had abandoned the ideal of the businessman - scholar which, they had now come to recognize, was increasingly unattainable, and were directing their energies towards the establishment of the University. Yet the ideal died hard, and three leading merchants at least could still be regarded as specialists in their own spheres, W.J. Lamport as a

philosopher who contributed to both the Westminster and Theological Reviews, H. A. Bright, contributor to the Athenaeum and Quarterly Review on British flora, and Malcom Gurthrie, a student and expositor of Herbert Spencer's philosophy, whose experiments in thought transference with Sir Oliver Lodge led eventually to partial madness.

The chief contribution which the radical elite made to the culture of the late Victorian city lay however in their fostering of local learned societies in each one of which they seem to play a prominent and often a leading role. The list is truly impressive. Joseph Boulton, art connoisseur and the city's leading expert on the river approaches and the Mersey Channels, Isaac Cooke, the noted amateur chemist and electrician, on both of which subjects he wrote extensively, T.E. Paget, the chairman of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, Charles J. English and Joseph Coventry, founders of the Liverpool Geographical Society, G. H. Morton, head of a firm of house painters, yet the most distinguished expert on local geology, as was Francis Archer, the solicitor, on local archaeology. Without the inspiration of these men culture could hardly have flourished at all in an environment so hostile as that of later Victorian Liverpool.

The Porcupine once pictured a Liverpool Unitarian 'retreating into his dimly-lit study, thanking his Maker and his library that he is not as other men' (186). Clearly indeed they thought of themselves, and were regarded by others, as the aristocracy of the town. The phrase 'the upper ten thousand' rather than 'our great middle class' was often used to designate the social group to which by standards, tastes, wealth and power, if not birth, they most naturally belonged; and confronted by the spectacle of Matthew Arnold laughing with his friends the Rathbones at Greenbank over the philistinism of the English middle classes, or George Melly admitting that on railway journeys 'there is much to be learnt from third-class conversation' (187), the historian is inclined to agree that this is not an inaccurate judgement. Yet one curious quality which characterised nearly all these men is not so readily explicable in terms of social class: their cringing dread of notoriety, their aversion to the limelight, their unobtrusiveness, and manifest awkwardness when they had against their will to appear before the public gaze.

The Booth 'reserve' was in each generation a marked family trait (or, as some would have it, a family failing), the Holts were virtually unknown outside their own family circle, and their hostility to any form of public recognition was said to have been 'almost pathological'. C.P. Melly shrank from appearing on a public platform with or without his brother, while Francis Boulton, offered a local magistracy, was agonized by the prospect of his passing judgment on others. W.J. Lamport was so averse to social intercourse that he even declined to become a member of the Dock Board, while Henry Tate would arrange a diplomatic illness every time he had to speak in public. (This reticence had of course a most unfortunate effect on local politics where the Unitarians, shunning the role of public men constituted themselves a behind-the-scenes pressure group wielding enormous power). Even when, as in the case of George Melly, they deliberately chose a political career their 'continental detachment' usually alienated their popular audience⁽¹⁸⁸⁾.

This strange combination of zeal for community service with anxiety to avoid the public acclaim which such service inevitably entailed is not easy to explain. Maybe it is due not so much to their sense of social exclusiveness as to the uncomfortable feeling that they derived their economic strength from a community whose values they abhorred, and of which they were critical almost to the point of despair. Not even at their most relaxed, when they were assuming the country gentleman style (as most of them did), and having themselves photographed holding guns or on horseback (their favourite pose) was this fear absent from the minds of these self-tormenting radicals. And this feeling of alienation from the common life of the bustling city must have been reinforced by their peculiar religious position as unorthodox Christians in a community where orthodoxy of one form or another was at a high premium. Even in politics they were nicknamed the Whiglins, a high-minded intellectual clique somewhere on the uncertain borderlands of Whiggism and radicalism, unpopular and distrusted by their fellow Reformers.

But ultimately the 19th century ethos of these 'Liverpool Brahmins', as Orchard rightly claims, was derived almost wholly from their leading family the Rathbones⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ who seemed to fix their stamp on the attitudes and activities of all their fellow Unitarians. In this context much of their feeling of self-distrust and rootlessness, as well as their feverish urge to justify themselves by the promotion of good works, seems

traceable to the events of 1805-6, that great renunciation when the Rathbones cut themselves away from family tradition and settled loyalties to embark on religious and economic ventures where they would be thrown back entirely on themselves and their own native good sense and reason. It was all very well for Roscoe to advise Rathbone to 'rise superior' to the 'weak and prejudiced minds' of his Quaker brethren⁽¹⁹⁰⁾, or Currie to congratulate him on 'putting aside the livery of a Scot', (i.e. his orthodox beliefs) and embracing 'true liberty of conscience'⁽¹⁹¹⁾. They understood their man as little as the faith he had now renounced. For the Rathbone family these events opened a wound which was never properly healed. Would he lose, Rathbone repeatedly enquired of his Irish correspondant John Hancock⁽¹⁹²⁾, the true humility of a Christian now that he had ceased to be a Friend? Would not the reading of the Scots economists and the French philosophes lead him inevitably to atheism? Should he have been content with a private situation in life?⁽¹⁹³⁾ To what disaster would his new religious and social aspirations not carry him?

Haltingly and painfully the Rathbones embarked on their 19th century quest, and if the ultimate goals were as unclear to William VI as they had been to William IV, in the process they had infected a denomination with their own peculiar spirit, and transformed a city by the splendour of their vision.

(4) The death of a tradition

Superficially the 80s and 90s were years of prosperity for Liverpool's Unitarian community. Agencies of expansion seemed to be flourishing on all sides. A Liverpool District Missionary Association, founded on the initiative of A. H. Bright in 1859, but long handicapped because of Thom's objection to the use of the word 'Unitarian', and the consequent withdrawal of lay support, became unusually active⁽¹⁹⁴⁾, not only in the surrounding towns and villages of the North West, but in Liverpool itself. Here a room had been taken in Roscommon Street as early as 1862, and thriving under the inspired leadership of a series of missionaries, a church in Hamilton Road had been built in 1871⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. Work was also commenced in Garston in 1886, and a small chapel taken. Meanwhile, as if in fulfilment of Charles Wicksteed's vision, his successor, the Rev. R.A. Armstrong, commenced a series of 'Services For The People, illustrative of Religion without Dogma'. These, held in the Rotunda and elsewhere, attracted on an average 500-600 working-class folk⁽¹⁹⁶⁾, many of whom not only

strengthened the Domestic Mission chapels and the Hamilton Road Church, but contributed to the founding of a new cause in Bootle Co-operative Hall in 1890. (The Bootle church was built a year later). This renewed missionary activity led in 1891 to the establishment of a successful Postal Mission for the benefit of persons who from various considerations found active involvement in Unitarian church life difficult or impossible.

Meanwhile the middle-class supporters of the two great churches were beginning to demand new organizations of a social and cultural rather than a missionary kind (rather like the orthodox Dissenters the Unitarians were beginning to subordinate the plight of the masses to the satisfaction of their own interests). A union of Domestic Mission workers, to provide these intelligent young men and women with opportunities for relaxation and gossip was founded in 1893, and about the same time the Unitarian Institute was opened in Sandon Terrace, to act as an intellectual power house as well as a recreation centre for the active members of all the local churches⁽¹⁹⁷⁾.

It is thus not surprising that the Unitarians were now emboldened to embark on renewed controversy with the orthodox - to support the Rev. Armstrong in his bitter pamphlet battles with the evangelical Anglican, the Rev. J. McMurchy, in 1892⁽¹⁹⁸⁾, the Domestic Mission workers in their conflict with the Rev. R.F. Herring of St. John's, Toxteth, who attacked them as 'despising Christ' - this was a particularly envenomed controversy and was only halted when Bishop Ryle intervened to impose silence on his clergy⁽¹⁹⁹⁾, or the entire body when in 1902 Bishop Chavasse, far less tactful in his public addresses than his ultra-evangelical predecessor, assailed the 'darkness of Unitarianism', a sermon which provoked a brilliantly astringent reply from the pen of Armstrong⁽²⁰⁰⁾.

Such were the marks of strength, but were they perhaps, as some hostile critics claimed, the last desperate efforts at self-justification by a body decaying inwardly to the point of death? Certainly not even the most optimistic Unitarian could pretend that all was well with the local churches, and the measure of the depression which had now set in may be judged firstly by the history of the two great churches⁽²⁰¹⁾, secondly from the decay of the Domestic Missions, and finally and, for a denomination like this, most seriously, from the growing defection of the laity.

The decline which set in from the 1870s onwards was more marked but hardly less real at Hope Street than at the sister chapel. Gordon and Wicksteed, an unusual but not unsuccessful partnership, had resigned in 1871 and 1872 respectively and had been succeeded by the Rev. E. M. Geldart M.A., in 1873. Geldart, an Oxford graduate, came to Hope Street straight from St. George's parish church, Everton, where he had been curate and where his reputation as an enfant terrible of the Establishment (his little book 'Sons of Beliel' was a merciless satire on the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Oxford in the 1860s) had finally provoked his resignation from holy orders⁽²⁰²⁾. Geldart, who was partly German, had a German wife and was deeply influenced by Strauss and continental rationalism, was in fact not a Unitarian of any recognizable variety at all, but an avowed freethinker who accepted no dogmas or doctrines of any kind, and preached Christ 'simply as a sentiment arising out of his own personal experience'⁽²⁰³⁾. He was also an advanced socialist, though he did not actually commit himself to Marxism till his departure from Liverpool⁽²⁰⁴⁾, and was remarkably impractical in his handling of congregational affairs. The results of his three year pastorate were altogether disastrous. The finances of the chapel were in chaos, several of the most prominent supporters, the Cooks, Rawlins, Gaskells, removed to Renshaw Street⁽²⁰⁵⁾, Mr Henry Bright opened up an interesting controversy in the pages of the Inquirer by demanding gloomily whether Unitarianism was passing through theism into open agnosticism⁽²⁰⁶⁾, while Henry Taylor pledged to the chapel an endowment of £1000, provided that the minister in future refrain from political activities. His offer was naturally declined⁽²⁰⁷⁾.

Geldart's successor, the Rev. C. J. Perry B.A., a young man straight from the Unitarian College, Manchester who arrived with the warm recommendations of Martineau and the Rev. Armstrong of Nottingham his former pastor, displayed during his short ministry a brilliance of mind and winsomeness of personality which gradually built up again a congregation of young people. Unfortunately within two years his health completely broke down and he died in 1883 at the age of 31⁽²⁰⁸⁾.

An earnest attempt was now made by the surviving members, among whom the Bowring, Meade-King, Genn, Boulton and English families were the only conspicuous names, to secure a very able pastor to revive the declining fortunes of the church. Fortunately the Rev. R. A. Armstrong of High Pavement, Nottingham, was already well known to the Hope Street

congregation through his associations with his protégé^e, the late minister, and was in addition suffering from vocal strain which demanded his removal to a smaller and more intimate chapel. Armstrong began his long pastorate in 1883.

Under Armstrong Hope Street once again became a powerful force in Liverpool church life. A forceful, brilliant personality, Armstrong came near to pioneering a new stage in Unitarian thought; for in his book 'God and the Soul' (1896) he added to Martineau's arguments from Causality and Conscience a third argument for Theism, 'an intuitive sense of a Divine Presence in Nature, such as that of which Wordsworth is the prophet' (209). This line of speculation, though approved by Martineau himself, was not however fruitful - the true development of Unitarian theology lay in the discovery of comparative religion, in which study Armstrong was unskilled. Nor for this same reason was he successful in his other designated task, that of popularizing Martineau's thought, though his little works on 'Faith and Doubt in the Century's Poets' (1898) and 'Agnosticism and Theism in the 19th Century' (1906) undoubtedly introduced to a wide audience the principal trends of recent religious thought (210).

Influential within Unitarian circles, Armstrong was hardly less active in the life of the city. His was essentially the Social Gospel, as he had made clear to the congregation on his appointment (211). With bitter memories of Geldart the congregation had reluctantly acquiesced, but Armstrong despite the extreme radicalism of his opinions brought, in his early years at least, only credit on the enlightened congregation which supported him. His pulpit exchanges with Baptists and Congregationalists, and his co-operation with liberal Anglicans such as C.W. Stubbs, the socialist vicar of Wavertree and later bishop of Truro, led in 1892 to the establishment of the Liverpool Pulpit as the organ of the Social Gospel within the city. By this time he was deeply involved in the Purity Crusade, questions of drink, prostitution and other problems of 'Municipal Morality' which led to this 'watch-dog of Liverpool's morals' becoming the leading figure in Liberal politics of the 1890s. That his influence, at its height in the later 90s, subsequently waned, and that, a depressed and lonely figure lost amidst the jingoism and materialism of the Edwardian age, he became a detested figure in the city to which he had given so much, is explicable only in the context of the political events of the period.

It is easy to lose sight of Armstrong the pastor in the midst of all this activity⁽²¹²⁾, and to forget to ask how his church fared under his forceful leadership. Certainly by the time of his resignation in 1905 it was not weakened (save in popular esteem). Numbers of young men and women, particularly teachers and students, rallied round him, though he never exercised the fascination of the more flamboyant Aked. The church, though small, was generally full, and though most of the former great names in Liverpool Unitarian life were conspicuous by their absence, a ministry such as this can hardly be dismissed as a failure.

The Rev. H.D. Roberts, assistant pastor in 1902 and sole pastor from 1905 to 1914, retained the small but devoted flock which Armstrong had gathered. A man of far less intellectual ability (if the history of his congregation, printed in 1909, is any indication of his talents), Roberts nonetheless kept up the radical tradition of his predecessor, and was an outspoken pacifist, till he joined the colours in 1914 and thus provoked a division in the congregation which was never healed throughout the duration of the War.

Under Armstrong and Roberts, Hope Street acquired a reputation of political radicalism and theological moderation. At the same time Renshaw Street was undergoing a process which led the congregation far to the left theologically, whilst maintaining the traditional mild liberalism of the Beard era.

Charles Beard was succeeded in 1888 by L.P. Jacks, a young student straight from Manchester College, Oxford. Few contemporary records of Jacks' six-year pastorate survive, but this lack is amply compensated for by the intriguing picture of church life at Renshaw Street which Jacks gives in his autobiography, 'Confessions of an Octogenarian', written in 1942. Jacks found the church denuded of young people who had all gone away to hear more popular preachers. The greybeards of the congregation appeared, rather like the chapel itself, 'the spirit of Puritanism turned into Stone'. Jacks, a man with no Unitarian background and few Unitarian connections, 'romantically-minded and half-pagan', at once seized upon Beard's catch-phrase 'completing the work of the Reformation', and with reckless abandon presumed to suggest the steps necessary for its completion. Unfortunately the congregation, its tradition now completely ossified, judged everything by the standards of Mr Thom (who still sat amongst them). Bold talk was unwelcome, either in the pulpit or on the political platform

(213) - even Jacks' riding a bicycle was objected to as compromising 'the dignity and importance of his office'. Not that the stiffness was universal: William Rathbone, surveying with his young minister the string of carriages and pairs which still lined Renshaw Street on Sunday mornings, exclaimed to his companion that the text of his next sermon should be 'Howl, ye rich'. But the atmosphere was stifling enough for Jacks, who had in Liverpool made the exciting intellectual discovery that in Dante's Divine Comedy he had somehow found the Reformation truly completed, to hand in his resignation and betake himself to Birmingham where the Church of the Messiah was not only less hidebound by the traditions of the past, but actually possessed a good number of young worshippers with whom the minister could find a companionship denied him in Liverpool.

The Rev. Dr. L.L.M.B. de Beaumont Klein (1895-1903), Jacks' successor, was apparently more acceptable to the congregation than the young Oxford rebel. Klein, a former Catholic priest, was a thinker of a mystical turn of mind (though he held the degree of Doctor of Science), and a skilful exponent of the Liberal Catholicism with which he had been associated and which had led to his leaving the Roman Church. Though frequently failing to understand the congregation, as they failed to understand him⁽²¹⁴⁾, Klein remained in his remote Germanic isolation minister of the congregation till he resigned from both the pastorate and the Unitarian ministry in 1903.

The greatest event of his pastorate, and in the upshot the most tragic mistake ever committed by the Liverpool Unitarian community had been the removal of the Renshaw Street congregation to Ullet Road in 1899. Such a move had of course been contemplated ever since the early days of Beard's ministry, but the later falling-off in congregational strength had caused it to be forgotten. But by the 1890s the vast majority of Renshaw Street seatholders were resident in the Sefton Park area, and were loudly demanding the building of a new church in the locality. Accordingly Ullet Road, an architectural gem of the late Gothic style, was erected between 1896 and 1899. It speaks well for the tastes of the congregation that such a beautiful building was commissioned by them, especially as several members contributed to the design themselves; Richard Rathbone for example, a distinguished amateur metal worker, and

his brother Harold, who had revived the Italian craft of glazed coloured reliefs, made themselves responsible for the doorways.

Klein, with his Jesuit past, was adamant on the architectural arrangements of the apse and on the introduction of a font (he had recently revived christenings in the church). There was much argument over whether the figure of Truth should be nude or clothed in classical draperies, and much irreverent discussion as to the significance of the three empty niches over the front gable⁽²¹⁵⁾, but the building, when completed, aroused the admiration of the city. Unfortunately however, as Thom and William Rathbone, who vigorously opposed the move from Renshaw Street, realised only too well⁽²¹⁶⁾ the results of all this in terms of denominational strategy would be disastrous. Instead of being an intellectual power-house in the centre of the city, this Unitarian church would now become a 'chapel-of-ease' for a close phalanx of inter-related families which would one day be dispersed. This indeed was more than suburban captivity - it was denominational suicide. Such predictions, borne out only too unhappily by subsequent events, really made irrelevant the debate as to what type of ministry should be exercised in the new building: suffice it to say that in the 57-year old Rev. Edwin Odgers who succeeded Klein in 1904, Ullet Road received the sort of wordly-wise, amiable and somewhat lazy personage who probably suited the congregation in its new surroundings but who would have been unthinkable thirty years previously.

At the same time as the two chapels were in their different ways entering the Silver age which prefaced their eclipse in the present century, the Domestic Missions were not without their difficulties. At Beaufort Street, even before the advent of Henry Shaen Solly in 1879 there had been tensions, but subscribers and missionaries had been in broad agreement as to the nature of the task they were pursuing together. With the arrival of Solly however, the son of a famous Unitarian minister and Chartist, quarrels at once arose, for he was an advanced thinker, and his report of 1881 was little more than a recommendation of the opinions of Henry George. His basic aim for the mission was really that of the University Settlement, but the committee was unable to agree to his schemes, a rupture took place, and Solly resigned in 1882⁽²¹⁷⁾. His successors, Thomas Lloyd Jones (1882-1917) and Joseph Anderton (assistant missionary, 1879-1919), achieved real success by confining themselves

strictly to the ideals of the founders, which were reaffirmed by Professor Carpenter, when, on the removal of the mission to new premises in Mill Street in 1892, he declared, "the time may come for the municipality to provide better homes for the people, but now is the time for us to provide better people for the homes"⁽²¹⁸⁾. Jones and Anderton were thus restricted, and their ministries in consequence unadventurous, but solid work was accomplished at Mill Street, even though financial support from the wealthy Unitarians was falling off seriously, and numbers remained small.

The fate of the Bond Street Mission was far different, and its history is more painful to relate. On Hawkes' resignation in 1887, following a brief and unsatisfactory interlude when the young and inexperienced Oxford scholar, the Rev. James Drummond, took over this difficult position, the Rev. J. Haigh became missionary in 1890. It soon became apparent that the work at Bond Street was becoming impossible. The area was increasingly Catholic, and the Mission was besieged all the time by Catholic roughs demanding relief and damaging the premises when refused. Gradually Haigh transferred the work to the more respectable district round the new Hamilton Road church, leaving Bond Street to the assistant missionaries, one of whom, the Rev. H. Bodell Smith (1897-8) was the Mission's first avowed Socialist and later founded the Crewe I.L.P. Bond Street neither requested nor could of course have expected any 'protection' from the Orangemen who were normally well to the fore in such circumstances, and finally in 1909 -after a particularly savage attack on the Mission and its supporters alike, Bond Street was closed and the entire work transferred to Hamilton Road⁽²¹⁹⁾. Here Haigh did not allow himself to be depressed by the way in which selfless idealism had surrendered to ugly mob violence: rather, quietly putting aside the original ideals of the Mission movement, he concentrated on building up a small and rather exclusive working-class church, writing hymns, poems and a novel, 'Sir Galahad of the Slums', which provides an interesting first-hand account of life in the depressed areas of Liverpool at that time.

Haigh's transformation of the Mission ideal into something of which the founding fathers would have entirely disapproved was dictated partly by the bitter experience of Bond Street, and partly by the sudden failure of the wealthy Unitarian families to contribute any longer to the Missions. This is one symptom of the malaise amongst the Unitarian laity at this time: Unfortunately it is merely one of many indications that, as the

Webbs had prophesied à propos these Liverpool families, the sons were not going to assume so readily the fathers' role as had been the case in the past⁽²²⁰⁾.

Their growing tightfistedness and the gradual abandonment of their high ideals of social service were partly due to the increasingly hostile atmosphere in which the Unitarian business families found themselves working. Their very broadmindedness was tinged with oldfashioned courtesy and increasingly subjected to strain, and their self-confidence as employers received a rude shock from the growth of Socialism and the Trades Unions. Their natural conservatism and their instinct for settling matters by personal contact with their workingmen for long kept them out of the Liverpool Shipowners' Association, a body formed largely to resist the demands of organized labour⁽²²¹⁾. When however in the 1890s the growth of Seamen's and Dockers' Unions not only destroyed their ideals but actually began to hamper their equally firm belief in efficiency, the Booths and others were left bewildered and alarmed at what was happening. Other tendencies of the age were equally obnoxious. The Holts and other Unitarian shipowners had hotly opposed the Plimsoll Act of 1875, not because of ideological objection to government interference, but because their own standards were -actually higher than those laid down in the act⁽²²²⁾. It was with difficulty that they were persuaded that the act had been necessary because the standards of other companies were so much lower than their own.

Behind these hardening attitudes there is of course what the business historians identify as an almost inevitable tendency of private concerns to become rigid and fixed in their habits, and after a period to lose efficiency and enterprise. There is plenty of evidence from the three leading Unitarian commercial firms, the Holts, Booths and Rathbones, that this is in fact what was happening to an alarming degree in the 1890s. The Booth Line for example was particularly hard hit in its Brazilian trade by French competition, and that^{of} the English Singlehurst Company. Meanwhile the Holt Brothers, Alfred and Philip, found themselves at constant variance with their junior partners as one by one in view of the increasing competition in the China trade they were compelled to throw over their cherished economic beliefs - their opposition to the Conference system, to the conversion of the Line into a public company, to anything which savoured of risky speculation⁽²²³⁾. In the Rathbone Company matters were

even worse. As early as the 1870s opposition to speculation had led to the crystallization of the Company's activities into stereotyped patterns⁽²²⁴⁾. By the 1880s the commission side of the business had died out altogether, and a decade later the cotton and tea trades were deteriorating rapidly. Younger partners like the Gairs denounced with some justice the excessive time and money expended by the Rathbone family on public affairs, but by this date the firm was so run down that all attempts to revive it appeared to be in vain⁽²²⁵⁾.

It is hardly surprising that the uncertainties of their business commitments are amply reflected in their attitudes to their churches and social duties. Was it not a fact, asked W.E. Orchard in 1895⁽²²⁶⁾ that even for the Unitarians whose mecca was Renshaw Street there was developing a marked tendency to stay at home or to slip into the nearest parish church. (This latter tendency is perhaps excusable in view of the ambivalent attitude towards the Establishment of such leaders as Thom and Wickstead). In few cases was there a definite break, though S.G. Rathbone formally left Renshaw Street and joined Sefton Park Presbyterian church⁽²²⁷⁾, and in most cases the financial contributions were kept up, especially for great occasions like Hospital Sunday, but the presence of well-known and honoured figures in the pews of Renshaw and Hope Streets was sorely missed. The kind of dilemma in which the Unitarians were now involved is underlined by a contribution of P. H. Holt to the Liverpool Unitarian Annual of 1894 on the question of church extension. Despairing of the Unitarian body which could no longer obtain enough ministers of suitable calibre for their 'small, propped up and subsidized chapels', he trusted to see such progress of the liberal spirit in the other churches that to them and to the power of the press should be resigned the future of free Christianity.⁽²²⁸⁾ Holt's views did not go unchallenged, but are characteristic of what some lay leaders of the denomination were now beginning to think.

It was however in relation to their philanthropic zeal that the Unitarians of this period suffered their sharpest decline from pristine standards. Particularly after the death of William Rathbone VI in 1902 there was a marked falling off in the number of active workers, if not in the amount of money subscribed. Partly the lack of male support was compensated for by the appearance of the younger generation of Unitarian ladies in social work, particularly as Friendly Visitors (the new form of social service which was in vogue in the 1890s), or as helpers

at the Everton Settlement established in 1898⁽²²⁹⁾ But it is surprising how many of these, of whom Eleanor Rathbone is the leading figure, found themselves engaged in a work for which religious inspiration appeared unnecessary or embarrassing. Eleanor is probably the first, but by no means the last, to cast away from her Unitarian moorings altogether. As for the menfolk, they were by now associated entirely with the Central Relief Society which the Rathbones had reorganized in 1863. As time went on, despite the original good intentions of the founders, the C.R.S. with its inquisitorial officials and principles of discrimination appeared to a freedom-loving people as harsher than the Poor Law, no better in fact than a state agency which Rathbone had refused to countenance because of its impersonal character. Secularists like Lee Jones, Anglicans like Canon Lester or orthodox Nonconformists like Mrs Birt and Samuel Smith who emphasised the warmth of personal contact seemed to have stolen the original inspiration of the Unitarians who now found themselves saddled with the embarrassing bumbledom of the C.R.S., a joke in the 1880s which turned into a horrid abuse in the great unemployment crisis of 1893⁽²³⁰⁾. Rathbone, the self-confessed socialist discovered that his enthusiasm for planning had rebounded with terrible force on the small company of high-principled reformers who had striven to rationalize the charitable organization of the city.

When a community whose religious opinions had always been regarded as a trifle outré and abandoned is failing to arouse the enthusiasm of its fellow-citizens even by its good works which they now reject as officious and misguided, and to these faults adds an involvement in politics calculated to antagonize almost every interest in the city, it is clear that the creative minority is well on the way to becoming (in its own eyes at least) a persecuted and despised righteous remnant, "a sect everywhere spoken against". The Boer War produced exactly this result, but to understand what led to the agonizing crisis of 1900 the whole story of Liverpool's 19th century radical politics, which is by and large the story of Liverpool Unitarianism in its political aspect, must be related, even if the radicals at the beginning as at the end appear an impotent minority and the whole story inbetween a Sisyphean task undertaken against impossible odds.

CHAPTER TEN:

THE CITY SCENE

RADICALISM IN A HOSTILE CLIME

That Liverpool was throughout the nineteenth century and beyond the stronghold of a particularly obstinate and tenacious type of popular Toryism was ascribed by dismayed Liberals to some kind of perversion or irrational prejudice on the part of its electors. John Bright's designation of the town as 'that monstrous thing' was one of the milder insults progressives hurled at its backward inhabitants. Even local Liberals when driven to desperation sometimes reacted in the same way (William Rathbone VI after a severe mauling at the hands of the Protestant Tories in the Council Chamber returned home and furiously tore up all the orange lillies in sight). More often however, as children of the enlightenment, they trusted to scientific enquiry and investigated dispassionately the causes of their ever-recurring lack of electoral success, and after a crushing defeat in the 1880s Captain Biggs, a local radical and a writer on numerous topics, produced a little book entitled "Some Reasons For The Conservatism Of Liverpool". Various aspects of the problem were carefully analysed: the undue influence exercised by the great property owners, Lords Derby, Sefton and Salisbury (an unconvincing argument since for most of the period two of these three peers sided with the Whigs); the narrowly oligarchic and plutocratic character of the local Reformist leadership (a very real weakness in the Whig/Liberal party and one to which Rational Dissent contributed in no small way); the absence in Liverpool of a sizeable managerial class and particularly of a politically conscious artisanry which elsewhere formed the backbone of local radicalism, a circumstance which arose from the peculiar concentration of all economic activity on the port and maritime enterprise; the consequent honeycombing of the whole social structure with commercial interests, not least those of the brewers, no one knowing where the influence of a single family began or ended, the clerk fearing the loss of a situation, the shopkeeper of a customer e.t.c.⁽¹⁾; above all, the vital factor of the religious prejudices of the Protestant masses, their passions stirred by the close identification of the growing Catholic community with the political fortunes of the Liberals.

Unfortunately one major factor contributing to radical insignificance which no local reformer would admit, at least not in public, was more important than any of the foregoing: for most of the century the real interests of the working classes were more adequately consulted and more fully served by the Tory party than by their opponents.

Till the 1830s and beyond the Liverpool masses believed, not unjustifiably, that their livelihood depended on the maintenance -first -of the slave trade and then of West Indian slavery; hardly was this 'prejudice' removed from their minds by the efforts of enlightened propagandists than a vast immigration of Irish Catholic paupers threatened not only their own standard of living but the cultural and social values of the entire community. It was not unnatural that the masses turned despairingly to the one party which was pledged to hold the menace at bay, and maintain the rights of the indigenous population. (That the masses expressed their grievances in religio-political rather than in economico-political terms was doubtless the real reason for the repulsion with which nineteenth century progressives regarded the city).

Against this unshakable Tory predominance the opposition strove in vain. Electing the occasional M.P., and for two brief periods actually seizing control of the local Council, but subject otherwise to the constant frustrations of permanent opposition, the Reformers of nineteenth century Liverpool soon dissolved into warring cliques and factions. The most significant of these was the little knot of Rational Dissenters who, though the numbers of their sect hardly increased throughout the period, emerge first of all as the Liverpool Jacobins, gradually acquire a stranglehold over the local Liberal party and retain it (usually to the dismay of its well-wishers) till the end of the century and beyond. Though this leadership was at first exercised only in alliance with the Anglican Whig families whose -influence slowly declines and disappears altogether after 1885, and though concessions had to be made both to the Roman Catholics and to other types of Dissenters, as the numbers of both of these increased, the capacity for political survival of 'our old families' is both remarkable in itself, and unparalleled in any other city. Perhaps only a community as conservative as Liverpool would have permitted such a self-perpetuating monopoly of political power. Whatever the explanation the Unitarians, proud of their tradition of intellectual freedom, convinced that their breadth of scientific vision gave them the privilege of dictating ideal political schemes to less enlightened beings and consoling themselves for every electoral defeat with thoughts of the Ultimate Triumph of Right, contributed another element of hauteur and condescending superiority to the baffling congeries of interests within the nineteenth century Reform party.

(1) Jacobins and Reformers

In 1789, however, though the earnest, young and freethinking intellectuals of the town's Presbyterian chapels may have been proud of the role their forbears had once played in the politics of the town, they were now chiefly conscious of their minority status, for all stood outside the mainstream of Liverpool commercial life which had become long since dominated by the slave-owning Corporation families⁽²⁾. For a number of years Roscoe, Currie, Rathbone and Rushton with the Reverends Shepherd, Smith and Yates, together with a solitary Anglican, William Smyth, later Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, had been associated in a number of literary and cultural ventures: when, with the coming of the French Revolution, their outlook suddenly acquired a political tinge, it was the same small coterie who shouldered the brunt of the political detraction and abuse which attached to all who were suspected of sympathy with the infidel French⁽³⁾.

Yet though these reformers were dubbed the 'Liverpool' Jacobins', sympathy with contemporary developments in France was only one aspect of the radical enthusiasm of the times. At least four other causes were upheld simultaneously by this same handful of zealots; the first major attack on the Liverpool slave-trade, a campaign for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, a movement for free trade with the Indies, and an intensive struggle with the close Corporation of the town. In the third and fourth of their five onslaughts the Jacobins were clearly promoting their own ambitions, in the second they were defying the real interests of the town's Freeman population, and in the fifth just as readily upholding them. Not for the first time the reformers of Liverpool found their political principles strangely confused, some at variance and others in accord with the basic attitudes of the Liverpool working class.

Even before the French Revolution broke out, a great service held at Benn's Garden chapel on 16th November 1788 to commemorate the centenary of the Glorious Revolution with a hymn specially composed by Roscoe for the occasion brought together in a reformist atmosphere the future leaders of Liverpool Jacobinism. An 'Ode To The People of France' appeared from Roscoe's pen in 1789, and on the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille a number of 'friends of liberty' assembled for a celebration, and Roscoe composed for the occasion a new song, 'Unfold, Father Time'⁽⁴⁾, which he

followed up with a bitter reply to Burke's 'Reflexions', 'The Life, Death and Wonderful Achievements of Edmund Burke', the following year⁽⁵⁾. In 1792 it was Shepherd who gave the most vocal expression to local revolutionary sentiment in his 'Verse Epistle To Edward Rushton', a surprisingly anti-clerical poem from the minister of Gateacre, and his scurrilous 'Edmund Burke To The Swinish Multitude'⁽⁶⁾. By this time too the anti-Jacobin crusade in other parts of the country was beginning to affect the Liverpool reformers: Miss Wakefield during her father's imprisonment had come to stay with the Cromptons at Eton House⁽⁷⁾, and Shepherd was soon to dismiss his school early so that he could visit Joyce and Wakefield in their London prison.

The last literary sally by the Liverpool Jacobins was Currie's 'Letter Commercial and Political Addressed to the Rt. Hon. William Pitt' (1793), written under the pseudonym of Jasper Wilson, a moderate work which sees political liberty and free trade as the obverse and reverse of the same coin⁽⁸⁾. By this date the atmosphere was becoming increasingly inflamed, and the Liverpool Jacobins had deemed it wisest to meet -no more for a public avowal of their beliefs.

Though Roscoe had attacked the Slave Trade in his poem 'Mount Pleasant', which appeared in 1777 and again in 'The Wrongs of Africa', published together with Rushton's 'West Indian Eclogues' ten years later, it was only in the latter year that a serious prose work of his, 'A General View of the African Slave Trade', provoked the famous controversy with the Jesuit Fr. Harris whose defence of the 'licitness' of the traffic earned him a pension from the Corporation. A bitter reply, 'A Scriptural Refutation' from Roscoe, frightened the Corporation through Mr P.W. Brancker into petitioning Parliament vigorously to uphold the trade⁽⁹⁾, and led a small group of Liverpool reformers to found a local branch of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1788⁽¹⁰⁾. It was an act of unprecedented moral courage on the part of the four Quakers, Dr. Binns, Nathaniel Daulby, the two William Rathbones and the three Unitarians, Roscoe, Wallace and Yates who were the original members⁽¹¹⁾. Smyth wrote from Cambridge to Currie, cautioning him lest he be 'thrown into the dock'⁽¹²⁾, and Roscoe admitted that from any point of view their action had been 'injudicious'⁽¹³⁾, but fearlessly they persevered, Currie and Roscoe devoting the profits from the Wrongs of Africa to the National committee of the Abolitionists.

In 1788 Rushton and others even brought out a newspaper, The Liverpool Weekly Herald, largely concerned with the attack on the slave trade. (The Herald, no copies of which appear to have survived, perished during the general anti-Jacobin reaction of late 1792). As early as 1790 the temper of the town towards the anti-slave traders was shown in the election of that year, the squibs of Gascoyne and Penrhyn, the sitting members and Tarleton, the challenger, all of whom were concerned in the trade in some way or another containing dark hints as to Liverpool's fate if the trade were swept ⁽¹⁴⁾away. By April 1792 when vital discussions on the issue were taking place in Parliament workmen in Liverpool were openly boasting that 'some houses in the town which they had marked should be pulled down', if abolition were to succeed ⁽¹⁵⁾. After this no further comment was heard from the Liverpool abolitionists for the next decade and more.

The agitation for the repeal of religious tests (which had not of course bothered the occasional conformist Presbyterians of the mid-eighteenth century in the slightest) was again part of a national movement with which the Liverpool Jacobins were fully identified. In January 1790 James Currie took the lead in organizing the Liverpool response to the repeal campaign by forming a local organization, and publishing an open letter in the local press ⁽¹⁶⁾. Currie, Arthur Heywood, France and Yates were the Liverpool representatives at a great Dissenting meeting held in Warrington a little later, where Currie indulged in a pamphlet war with the Rev. Edward Owen, an Anglican clergyman whom he forced publicly to recant his anti-nonconformist polemic ⁽¹⁷⁾. This particular campaign was however soon submerged under far weightier issues, and nothing more was heard of the Clarendon Code till the turn of the century.

The struggle for the repeal of the East India Company's charter is likewise chiefly important as a foreshadowing of what was to become a major controversy at a later date. A great public meeting held on November 23rd 1792 to denounce the East India monopoly and the Company's proposal to raise an additional capital of £2 millions saw once again the leading Liverpool Jacobins gathered together on a common political platform ⁽¹⁸⁾, but this agitation, intended to be the first in a series was soon subsumed into the much weightier confrontation between the Liverpool freemen and the close Corporation.

The long-standing struggle of the freemen against oligarchic privilege flared up after a long period of uneasy peace in October 1790 when a memorial signed by 36 prominent freemen complained to the Mayor and bailiffs of the method of filling recent vacancies on the Council and of the men chosen to fill them. The Liverpool Jacobins were this time not single-handed in their democratic protests. Anglican Whigs such as Willis Earle and Ellis Hodgson, and even a few Tories were among the signatories⁽¹⁹⁾. At the start of 1791 a petition of 1028 freemen was collected, calling for a Common Hall to select new Council members. The Hall met on 17th January, duly chose the members, and emboldened by William Rathbone's leadership next demanded an audit of the Town Books which was refused. The Corporation challenged the new councillors' credentials, and a protracted law suit ensued in the King's Bench, which was terminated only in 1792 when the freemen leaders' patience and funds were both exhausted. Tumultuous scenes were witnessed throughout these proceedings, and the Nicholson family were mobbed in the streets by excited freemen.

At the end of November 1792 however an ominous note was struck when the Recorder and Mayor of Liverpool ordered 1000 copies of an anti-Jacobin declaration to be printed and distributed free in the town. To this document (the Resolutions as it was commonly called) which was both violent in tone and contained implicitly an encouragement to violence against the local reformers, Rathbone at once replied with a pamphlet entitled 'Equality', and was rewarded with a libel action for his pains⁽²⁰⁾. Democratic feeling was running high however, and the pressure of moderate Whigs finally forced the Mayor to summon a General Meeting of the inhabitants to the Town Hall on December 8th, so that the true sense of Liverpool opinion could be gauged. Here, despite Tory opposition Rathbone and Roscoe, 'the mainstay of the reforming party'⁽²¹⁾ produced a spirited address containing 1100 signatures, 'the parsons and the high church found themselves in an unaccustomed minority', and a moderate declaration of grievances drawn up by Joseph Birch was overwhelmingly approved⁽²²⁾. The last word however lay with the Corporation, for at an adjourned meeting at the Exchange on December 10th an angry Tory mob confronted Rathbone at the head of what he was pleased to call his 'sansculottes', and the eloquent Quaker was shouted down and jostled. From this point on the Liverpool Jacobins were 'marked men'⁽²³⁾, and the collector of customs kept a careful check on their activities with a view to future prosecution⁽²⁴⁾.

Thus, though early in 1793 Rathbone attempted to call another meeting to petition for the dismissal of Pitt, and wrote a stirring pamphlet pleading for peace with France⁽²⁵⁾ his influence even with the freemen (whose loyalism had been rearoused by Liverpool's involvement in war with France as well as by anti-Jacobin pamphlets and sermons) was now completely at an end. The crisis of November to December 1792 had left him a physical and emotional wreck, his hair turned white almost overnight (hence his later nickname, the hoary traitor), and full of religious doubts and perplexities⁽²⁶⁾. For public affairs, 'having regard to the lunacy of the town'⁽²⁷⁾ he had no longer any inclination: he would devote the rest of his life to religious enquiry. Currie was similarly disillusioned. The government authorities, noting the moderate, even apologetic tone of the Jasper Wilson letter, commissioned George Chalmers to write a reasoned, moderate reply with the intention quietly to silence rather than to harry this skilful and widely respected pamphleteer. Their success was complete⁽²⁸⁾. Currie threw himself heart and soul into his medical work among the poor, though as a precaution he borrowed £1200 and enquired after a property in Virginia, for, as he wrote, 'the poor, persecuted and abused Presbyterians are universally broken-hearted and are preparing for emigration to America in vast numbers'⁽²⁹⁾. Shepherd too secured a property in Kentucky in preparation for flight, while Roscoe, his revolutionary passion completely extinguished by the fall of the Gironde, wrote to Lord Landsdowne, 'the leaders have apostatised and the disciples perish'⁽³⁰⁾. Even the meetings of the literary circle were suspended in view of the severity of the anti-Jacobin reaction, and Shepherd in one of his rare poems bade his friend Roscoe find peace from 'intestine broils and foreign rage' amid his 'domestic comforts'. It was prudent advice wisely acted upon.

The next few years saw the Liverpool Jacobins silenced and on the defensive. There was a slight stirring in November 1795 when a petition was organized against the government's repressive measures⁽³¹⁾: 4000 signatures were obtained, but a loyal petition received far more, and no delegation was in fact sent up to London. A year later Roscoe was in print again with his 'Strictures On Mr Burke's Two letters', a tract pleading for the reopening of peace negotiations with France. In 1797 however when Roscoe sent an article to the Morning Chronicle on the same theme it was not allowed to appear. Rathbone and Roscoe were both in despair, lamenting that no minority view could now obtain a hearing, fulminating against the

men and events which had reduced their party to silence⁽³²⁾. Fortunately the Jacobins had plenty of opportunity for expending their social energies in other directions. Currie for example apart from his medical work which led him in 1802 into a clash with local property owners over the already notorious cellar-dwellings⁽³³⁾ conducted with the help of Rathbone and Roscoe a vigorous campaign for improved conditions among the French prisoners of war, securing by his efforts the appointment of a government commission to visit the prison in 1801, but involving himself meanwhile in a number of clashes, one of them unpleasantly violent⁽³⁴⁾. Above all however these were the years when Rational Dissent in general acquired in Liverpool the economic basis for the social and political role it was to occupy later on, when the Booths emerged unquestionably as the spokesmen of the Liverpool corn trade, when Roscoe by means which are even today obscure, acquired his personal fortune⁽³⁵⁾, when the Rathbones built up the commercial ascendancy of their trading house, the Presbyterian congregations welcomed an influx of new men anxious and generally able to turn a pittance into a fortune⁽³⁶⁾, when the cottonbroker, generally a Dissenter and deeply concerned for the abrogation of the East India Company's charter, first made his appearance in the town⁽³⁷⁾, and when, above all, following the lead of the Heywoods in the 1770's George Booth, Currie and Rathbone combined to found the St. George's Fire Office (1802), thus initiating one of the most necessary and lucrative ancillary services to the nineteenth century expansion of Liverpool shipping⁽³⁸⁾. The growing prosperity of Liverpool's Unitarian community is reflected in their gradual admission to an ever greater share in the affairs of the local Whig party until by 1806 they can be fairly said to dominate the same, and were able to arrogate to themselves the choice of parliamentary candidates.

In the election of 1796 their role was fairly small. Two military gentlemen, General Gascoyne and General Tarleton, the former a mean and selfish man who later on habitually secured election by an embarrassing parade of his war wounds, the latter an exhibitionist who curried favour by ob^cs^en^ce antics and curious ribaldry, and both of whose political careers were completely undistinguished⁽³⁹⁾ presented themselves to the voters of Liverpool. Tarleton however, a sitting member, had in the anti-Jacobin atmosphere of the times erred gravely in identifying himself with the Whigs and advocating peace with France: Accordingly a third candidate offered himself for election, Tarleton's own brother, John, whose High Tory

principles were identical with Gascoyne's. Naturally the Rational Dissenters lent their aid to the aggrieved sitting member, despite the fact that Tarleton's fortunes were largely based on his slave-trading interests. The Tories made the most of the General's Unitarian support, publishing a handbill appealing for the 'rejection of all those who openly avow their disbelief in the important truths of Christianity'⁽⁴⁰⁾, castigating Tarleton as a Jacobin himself, and issuing a squib which ended;

Yet I can't spare the men who the General support,
Proper objects of satire, fit only for sport,
Presbyterians and Jacobins round him unite,
Who their sovereign detest and sedition incite⁽⁴¹⁾.

In the upshot the two generals were again re-elected, and the impetuous challenger appeared at the foot of the poll with only 317 votes. By 1802 the Rational Dissenters were prepared to play a larger share in local politics and in the election of that year the official Whig candidate chosen to oppose the generals was in fact Joseph Birch of the Hasles, Prescott, a Liverpool merchant whose face was often seen in the Prescott Unitarian congregation. (A fourth candidate, Mr F. Chalmer, a local tobacco broker, stood on behalf of the independent freemen, but received only 31 votes) In his campaign Birch made much of the obvious absurdity of a great commercial centre being represented by two inept soldiers⁽⁴²⁾, and proclaiming himself a friend of Peace, Trade and Prosperity, took as his symbol the 'big loaf'. This was enough for the Tory pamphleteers who denounced him as a corn jew, a merciless exploiter of the poor, and his and Chalmer's supporters as 'a canting, hypocritical, jesuitical set of Presbyterians who preach up the liberty they never wish to see in practice'⁽⁴³⁾. Birch was then given some sage advice:

Exclude from your councils all Jacobin pates,
Nor put too much trust in that Calvinist Yates,
That grim-looking doctor from Derby expelled
In contempt and derision will always be held⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Once again the two generals were elected⁽⁴⁵⁾, though Birch who polled well with 477 votes had taken the precaution to stand for Nottingham also and was duly returned for that town.

By November 1806 when Liverpool was again plunged into the excitement of a contested election Arthur Heywood had emerged as the undisputed Whig organizer, and not unnaturally Roscoe himself was nominated, after an

attempt to secure Lord Sefton had failed⁽⁴⁶⁾, as parliamentary candidate for the town.

This time everything seemed to be conspiring towards a notable success for the reform party. Roscoe was at the height of his literary and business career, and could certainly afford the expense of a Liverpool election (in effect he paid out about £12,000, most of it on bribery). The two generals were by this time exceedingly unpopular, especially Tarleton who had ignored several local commercial deputations to Parliament, had again been guilty of a political volte-face, deserting Fox for Pitt, and had become a government pensioner. Roscoe on the contrary was basking in the reflected glory of his reputation as a philanthropist which his Liverpool admirers readily turned to political account⁽⁴⁷⁾. Again the generals, confused in any case by the recent death of Pitt, had never expected their re-election to be contested seriously, took few steps to bribe the electors (spending between them a mere £7000) and, most seriously, ignored the 'outvoters', an ill-important factor in Liverpool elections, then as now. Roscoe on the contrary was at great pains to bring in his supporters from Manchester where the Heywoods opened a 'house' for their benefit⁽⁴⁸⁾, and from as far away as Sedgeley and Plymouth⁽⁴⁹⁾. The generals also enjoyed no fresh accession of electoral strength from any quarter; Roscoe on the contrary was inundated with letters of support from the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Derby and Lord Holland among others and, as a representative of their interests enjoyed the services of the 'phalanx of clerks' attached to the hard-pressed American commercial houses, a decisive contribution to his eventual success⁽⁵⁰⁾. But the two most significant factors in the election would doubtless be the attitude of the freemen, and the question of the slave trade, and in both instances events unexpectedly worked in Roscoe's favour. Relations between the freemen and the Corporation were now as bad as they had been in the early 1790s, for the latter had not only been busily enclosing stretches of common land, but had also committed the error of employing non-freemen in corporation works to the anger of the townsfolk. Roscoe had thus no difficulty in presenting himself as the freemen's candidate, the upholder of their liberties against their masters' oppression, a champion who would give them the first opportunity to express their political independence since Sir William Meredith's election in 1761⁽⁵¹⁾.

The reform candidate at once expressed his determination that as many as possible of the 3000 Liverpool electors (about five sixths of whom could

be described as working men) who had held back in 1796 and 1802 should this time dare to register their votes and create a situation where it would thereafter be impossible 'for any man or any body of men to dictate to men determined to exercise their dearest right' ⁽⁵²⁾. Again Roscoe, the notorious abolitionist, was addressing an electorate now convinced that the slave trade was doomed. Wilberforce's victory was in fact regarded as so certain that the previous two years had seen in Liverpool a tremendous burst of slave-trading activity, only to be explained as an attempt to make a hasty profit while the abuse still lasted ⁽⁵³⁾. It was thus only necessary for Roscoe to insist on the two necessary principles of gradual abolition and compensation for losses ⁽⁵⁴⁾: otherwise the inevitability of abolition made the slave trade 'a false issue' ⁽⁵⁵⁾, though Roscoe was careful to paint a magnificent picture of the future commercial greatness of the port when the East India Company's monopoly was abolished, the new South American trade put on a proper footing, and the profitable Liverpool-American connection developed as fully as it deserved to be. (Critics did not fail to point out that Roscoe's chief backers were the American merchants, or that the Rathbones and Croppers had achieved such primacy in that trade that they were already acting as a kind of unofficial consular service for the American government in England ⁽⁵⁶⁾).

With every advantage in his favour Roscoe could well afford to give no political pledge at all during the election campaign of November 1806, other than his complete sympathy with the claims of the Independent freemen. The Tories' every ruse seemed somehow to fail: the old cry of Corn-Jews and Grocers he could treat with disdain and attempts to whip up religious prejudice (the Anglican clergy were far more active in the streets on this occasion than in any previous election) rebounded to their discredit. 'Church and King' was, declared Roscoe, 'an exploded cry. We are all for Church and King' ⁽⁵⁷⁾. Alarmist and scurrilous cries such as 'No African trade. The workhouse for carpenters, coopers, riggers, and sailmakers. Roscoe for Ever!' or 'You will beg your bread and quit your country for you will never obtain relief from the Presbyterians' ⁽⁵⁸⁾ he could afford to ignore. Even the Tory charge that he was of lowly birth and formerly of humble occupation Roscoe could counter by reference to the respectability of his supporters, Sefton, 'a gentleman of birth and extensive property', or Stanley 'the illustrious' ⁽⁵⁹⁾. Meanwhile Tarleton floundered from error to error, first of all making a coalition with Gascoyne (always a dangerous

move in Liverpool politics) and then when Roscoe's victory seemed assured, trying to identify himself with the Freeman's hero. When the polling closed, Roscoe was at the head with 1151 votes, Gascoyne second, though of course still victorious in this two-member constituency, with 1138 and Tarleton at the foot of the poll with 986. Amidst scenes of tremendous popular enthusiasm Roscoe on November 25th did what he had consistently refused to do during the election and outlined the principles which would guide his parliamentary conduct - to work for an honourable and lasting peace, 'when our superiority of manufactures in far competition will bring blessings on the land,' to encourage industry and agriculture and eliminate crippling taxation, to work for the abolition of the trade and for 'gradual and temperate' measures of parliamentary reform, and to modify the East India Company's charter⁽⁶⁰⁾.

Roscoe's parliamentary career, begun so auspiciously, turned out however to be a bitter and agonizing experience. The difficult circumstances of London life and the separation from his family proved demoralising and contributed to a recurrence of nervous disorders⁽⁶¹⁾ which Leyland's unexpected dissolution of their commercial partnership did nothing to assuage⁽⁶²⁾. Roscoe in consequence was rarely in the House, and his failure to make the resounding speeches expected of him perplexed his ardent supporters⁽⁶³⁾. Meanwhile he was constantly besieged with demands for action on the part of the American merchants who behaved with excessive importunity as well as unnecessary discourtesy to his fellow member, Gascoyne⁽⁶⁴⁾, together with a flow of exhortations from his friend Rathbone urging him to greater efforts over the East India question⁽⁶⁵⁾. He soon found himself moreover drawn into political alignments which were bound to have serious repercussions in Liverpool, the debate over Catholic emancipation in the spring of 1807 when Roscoe upheld Catholic rights against the eloquence of Canning⁽⁶⁶⁾, the founding of the African Institute and Whitbread's plan for poor schools, whilst on the slave trade question itself Roscoe, grossly distorting his former pledges, spoke of the 'real compensation' for abolition which would be found in the opening up of the East Indies trade. With frightening naivety he wrote to Rathbone that 'adherence to one's principles can hardly be made any very substantial cause of reproach'⁽⁶⁷⁾. Unfortunately the news from Liverpool, of his erst-while supporters thrown out of work, of financial losses to the port which a recent historian has calculated at £7½ million⁽⁶⁸⁾, of hot speeches at the Church and King Club, and a sudden and 'infatuated' Tory reaction which was

redolent of the worst excesses of the anti-Jacobin period⁽⁶⁹⁾ all indicated to the unhappy M.P. that Liverpool's enthusiasm for the cause of Reform was likely to be short-lived. By April 1807 Roscoe had probably resolved not to contest the seat again.

At the dissolution of Parliament he did not of course shirk what was his obvious duty, to return to Liverpool and give an account of his conduct. But the reception he was accorded by bands of half-starved seamen armed with bludgeons, the break-up of his procession and the stabbing of one of his horses in Castle Street proved too much. Having reached his bank Roscoe amid great clamour referred with pride to his parliamentary conduct, but declared he would not give his enemies further opportunity for excesses such as he had just witnessed and withdrew from the impending contest⁽⁷⁰⁾.

A few days later however a handful of his keenest supporters raised a sum of money and nominated him to his deep regret for re-election against the two generals, Tarleton having now returned to seek his fortune in Liverpool once again. During the seven days (May 7th - 15th 1807) that Roscoe's nomination was sustained, his Tory opponents launched on the town a campaign of scurrilous squibs and pamphlets of a vitriolic tone which seemed to reflect the distressing circumstances in which the townsmen now found themselves. A series of mock 'Papal Bulls' called upon 'all apprentices, jailbirds, ragamuffins, Presbyterians, rogues, Methodists and whores' to support Roscoe, 'the stimulator of His Holiness' person', as he was lampooned. The Quakers whose quietest pretensions belied their political activism were an especial target of abuse, while

'The silky-fleeced Presbyters we'll eagerly spurn,

The foe to the slave trade we'll never return'.

Even Roscoe's literary reputation was used against him, and a Liverpool workman was represented as exclaiming, 'He is an ornament to the town, but what have we poor folk to do with ornaments?'⁽⁷¹⁾ Meanwhile on the occasions he could make himself heard, Roscoe conducted one of the feeblest campaigns in Liverpool's electoral history. It was in vain for him to speak of the fillip he had given both to the West Indian and American merchants, for this dubious claim only played into the hands of his opponents, in vain to dwell on the respectability of his support which no longer impressed starving men, and in vain to remind the voters that he had given the independent freemen their first opportunity to defy the domination of their masters, a privilege that they should not lose, despite the 'temporary losses' arising from the abolition of the trade. It was

finally the height of folly to claim that as his own vote in favour of abolition was only one of a majority of 64 it was really immaterial to the final issue - a piece of casuistry treated with the outraged anger it deserved. Finally amid cries of 'Down with the Rump, the canting Presbyterians, the vile Corn-Jews' Roscoe on May 15th withdrew his candidature. He had polled a mere 377 votes to Tarleton's 1461 and Gascoyne's 1277. Lord Holland described the defeat as 'a disgrace to the country', the Duke of Gloucester reassured Roscoe that he could now fulfil his natural inclination for peace and retirement, and another correspondent, Dr. J.E. Smith, comforted him with the reflection that 'the world is not worthy of you'⁽⁷²⁾. Roscoe, attributing his defeat blandly to the 'temporary delusion of the public mind'⁽⁷³⁾, withdrew to Allerton Hall to resume his interrupted renaissance studies, declining with thanks an offer from Lord Derby of a deputy-lieutenancy on the grounds that, as a firm Dissenter, the occasional conformity which would be demanded of him was obnoxious to his principles⁽⁷⁴⁾.

The brief parliamentary career of Roscoe had left behind it a bitter heritage of disillusionment and ill-feeling. More specifically however, it had two consequences which recur conspicuously in the contests of the next fifty years and more. Firstly the Liverpool electorate had given a resounding verdict against the intellectual in politics, and a vote of confidence for the 'practical men' who would truly represent its interests at Westminster; secondly the Rational Dissenters had struck up a fortuitous liaison with the Whig aristocracy which was to last as long as Roscoe and Shephard, its chief authors, were active on the political scene.

During the five-year interlude before Liverpool was troubled by another election (this time an even more momentous contest than those of 1806 & 1807), the reformers of Liverpool concentrated their endeavours almost wholly on commercial grievances, and purely political issues tended to fall into the background. Each year indeed on November 8th a great anniversary dinner was held to celebrate Roscoe's election of 1806, and the resolutions on those festive occasions reminded local reformers that the struggles for parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation, and purity of government would have one day to be renewed⁽⁷⁵⁾, and an occasional pamphlet appeared from the hand of one ageing radical or another. The Rev. Dr. Shepherd for example in 1810 composed a scurrilous 'Epitaph for William Pitt' to harry the Liverpool Pittites who had held a great anniversary celebration of their hero's birthday, and was again in print the following year with the Travels of Abdullah, a tract

against West Indian Slavery, and an Open letter to Sir Francis Burdett M.P., criticising the flogging of a soldier who had complained to the press about abuses in his regiment⁽⁶⁷⁾. Roscoe too, having corresponded with Major Cartwright on the subject of parliamentary reform, composed a letter to Henry Brougham Esq., in April 1811, pleading for a measure of parliamentary reform, voting rights for all householders, the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs, and the exclusion of placemen from the House of Commons. Roscoe however, now lamenting the Jacobin enthusiasm of his earlier years, declined to join the Major's Society of Friends of Parliamentary Reform on the grounds of prudence⁽⁷⁷⁾, and a tract of 1812 'An Answer to Mr. John Merritt on the subject of Parliamentary Reform' is whiggish in tone and almost entirely historical in substance.

In truth, from 1807 onwards the Liverpool radicals, and especially the merchants among them, had made the discovery that the Orders in Council because these offended their material interests rather than their political ideals constituted the greatest of their hardships.

The Orders themselves, followed closely by the Jefferson embargo, produced a storm of protest among the American merchants of the town. The Nicholsons were especially hard-hit⁽⁷⁸⁾ and two meetings held in the summer of 1807, the first on July 25th and the second on 11th August, demanded respectively government action on the E.I. Company charter and the immediate opening up of peace negotiations with America. Both were chaired by Rathbone, and prominent among the speakers were Samuel Hope, the Thornleys, James Cropper and even an occasional Tory merchant such as John Gladstone. The resolutions which Rathbone put to the meetings were of course carried unanimously. The following year the situation worsened considerably, and William Rathbone IV, writing to his son, feared that the Orders in Council would not only cripple the family business but lead to the Americans' confiscating the considerable Rathbone properties in the New World⁽⁷⁹⁾. Roscoe at once set to work on two pamphlets against the Orders and another giving the government his own Proposals for Peace, while Rathbone despite his advanced age and general weakness, was chosen to lead a deputation to London where the Liverpool Quakers gave evidence on the working of the Orders before the bar of both Houses. ~~His impression of London where the Liverpool Quakers gave evidence on the working of the Orders before the bar of both Houses.~~ His impression of London was however no better than Roscoe's: Parliament he found 'venal and corrupt', and possessed of a 'dreadfully low and degrading, malignant and

envious spirit towards the rising greatness of America' ⁽⁸⁰⁾. He returned to Liverpool angry and disillusioned, and writing to Thomas Walker of Manchester on 26th August 1808 was tempted to wonder whether the £15,000 which the Liverpool Patriots had expended on Roscoe's two elections and on the E.I. Company and Orders In Council agitations had not been in vain ⁽⁸¹⁾. Gascoyne's reception of him had been courteous and helpful, though Tarleton, who had dismissed his observations by declaring that 3/- a day was quite enough for a Liverpool carpenter to live on, he found beneath contempt ⁽⁸²⁾. The following three years saw the agitation continued, though the name of Rathbone, following William IV's death in 1809, is hardly as conspicuous as before, and commercial resolutions begin to take precedence over politics even at the annual November dinners of the Patriots. Significantly too the number of toasts and references to Messrs. Greevy and Brougham, by now regarded as the special mouthpiece of the Liverpool West Indian and American merchants respectively, show a significant increase, while the Tory Corporation, becoming more obscurantist the more distress in Liverpool increased, succeeded in 1811 in preventing any further public meetings to debate the Orders In Council, despite the pressure of the Rathbones, Booths, Thornleys, Fremes, Croppers and Matfthers, and came within an ace of preventing even private meetings for the discussion of grievances.

But with the early months of 1812 producing in Liverpool acute distress, comparable to that following the abolition of the trade in 1807, and with an American war now a distinct possibility, the efforts of the Patriots were naturally redoubled. Roscoe's hopes were now pinned entirely on Brougham with whom he began a voluminous correspondence ⁽⁸³⁾, and the young Thomas Thornley travelled to London to interview the champion of the American trade in person. In March Roscoe chaired a great meeting to demand the opening up of the East India trade ⁽⁸⁴⁾, and in April one to petition for the repeal of the Orders in Council, following which Cropper and Thornley, as two of Liverpool's first American merchants' conveyed a petition to the House of Lords where the American lobby found a ready spokesman in Lord Derby ⁽⁸⁵⁾, though when finally in August 1812 the Orders were repealed, it was to Lord Holland that the Liverpool merchants accorded their heartiest congratulations ⁽⁸⁶⁾. Though this move came of course too late to avert the American war, a great reform dinner held in Liverpool on 5th September under Roscoe's chairmanship gave enthusiastic applause to Lord Brougham whose stock in radical eyes now stood very high, for he had just secured the acquittal of 38 reformers recently

imprisoned in Manchester.

Clearly by now criticism of the government's commercial policy, and the demand for parliamentary reform were complementary in the Liverpool Reformers' programme, and as early as May 1812 Shepherd in a vigorous speech to the Friends of Free Election had deplored the continuation of the war, the East India monopoly, Catholic disabilities, ministerial corruption, and the burden of the poor rates (as well as the grievous sufferings of the poor themselves)⁽⁸⁷⁾. When in October an election was seen to be imminent, Roscoe and his friends could do no other than invite the mercurial Brougham to contest Liverpool on their behalf.

The election of 1812 is one of the most memorable in Liverpool history. As soon as Roscoe's determination to nominate Brougham was known, the aristocratic Whigs withdrew their patronage from one whom they could only regard as an intrigant and a parvenu⁽⁸⁸⁾. Their disaffection was increased when Roscoe insisted on running as a second candidate the garrulous, Liverpool-born Thomas Creevy whose lower middle-class background was even more distasteful than Brougham's. Roscoe to whom the reform party had entrusted complete control of the management of the election was determined to run the two radicals together, even though when Greevy's defeat appeared certain, a move was made by the more moderate Whigs and Tories to return Canning and Brougham jointly, and bring an end to an expensive contest which cost the Whigs a total of £8,000 and the Tories £50,000. Canning was of course the nominee of Sir John Gladstone, 'the prince of political organizers'⁽⁸⁹⁾ and the nouveaux riches 'commercial' Tories: the older Tories spurned him for the same reasons as the aristocratic Whigs had disowned Brougham. General Gascoyne was again their nominee, Tarleton having utterly disgraced himself by recently accepting a notorious sinecure, the governorship of Berwick-on-Tweed⁽⁹⁰⁾. With two of the finest freelance orators (and one of the best talkers) in the land contesting the same constituency, the election of October 1812 could not be other than entertaining.

The contest began, as Liverpool elections seldom did, with a serious discussion of political issues. Personalities of course inevitably crept into the campaign, and Canning was not helped by rumours of the pensions he had secured for his family and retainers, while Brougham and Creevy were reminded of the fact that they had both previously represented rotten boroughs (Camelford had recently become impossible for Brougham, though Thetford was contested by Creevy jointly with Liverpool. He wasted three valuable weeks in Norfolk,

upholding his cause in Liverpool by means of his interminable letters⁽⁹¹⁾). Policies however really counted during the first days of the contest, Brougham standing for the reduction of taxes, peace with America and France, moderate parliamentary reform and the opening-up of the East India trade, Canning dwelling on the reputation for financial genius he had acquired during the past two years, referring to his own part in the repeal of the Orders, pledging himself on the E.I. Company charter, hotly refusing to countenance Catholic emancipation, and expressing a determination to prosecute with renewed vigour the wars with France and America. Peace, Canning declared, would not promote our commerce, only encourage our enemies to destroy it completely⁽⁹²⁾. Roscoe himself was frequently referred to by both sides, by Brougham as the far-sighted patriot whose policies, had they been acted upon in 1807, would have saved Liverpool from her present distress⁽⁹³⁾, by Canning and Gascoyne as the cowardly recluse who had not dared to fight in 1812 and had even refused an invitation from the radicals of Westminster to uphold their interests.

Soon enough the election resumed the traditional pattern of an abusive personal vendetta which the Liverpool electorate seemed on the whole to prefer to a more serious campaign. A Tory reference to the Whigs as 'milkshops' for having this time refused to bribe the voters with beer was countered by malicious attacks on Canning's mother and the pensions he had secured for certain of his doubtful friends and relations. After this the contest rapidly degenerated into a verbal brawl with the Rational Dissenters the principle target of Tory sarcasm. The Whigs' platform orators seemed indeed to be drawn almost solidly from the seatholders of the two old Presbyterian chapels, Yates, Roscoe, Shepherd, Wallace, Rawson, Bolton, Thornley, W.W. Currie, Heywood, Fletcher and Hugh Jones all contributing to the campaign to the almost total exclusion of the Anglican Whigs. In September the 'Bishop of Paradise Street Pandemonium' was addressed in a Tory squib and pictured as blessing the French armies in the Peninsula⁽⁹⁴⁾, and on October 15th it was suggested that 'the bells of the Presbyterian chapels be muffled, the organs and basoons to cease their melody, and collections be held to pay off the National Debt'⁽⁹⁵⁾. Shepherd was bitterly satirized and one squib attacked not only the reverend doctor and his congregation but Gateacre village itself:-

'Not quite six miles from this good, loyal town
Low in a valley lies a village vile.

'Tis here each Sabbath some apostates meet,
Some rotten sheep to worship God, they say!

A rotten shepherd comes the flock to greet

Rational argument was now completely in vain, and the final result showed Canning and Gascoyne returned with 1631 and 1532 votes respectively, with Brougham and Greevy having polled 1131 and 1068.

(2) The Canning - Huskisson Era : The Eclipse of
Radicalism (1812-30)

The election of 1812 had been more than a temporary setback for the cause of reform. It had seen the advent of a new type of Toryism, realist, pragmatic, flexible and appealing directly to the newly established mercantile families of the town, to whom the traditional Toryism which Gascoyne still represented seemed meaningless and irrelevant. Its tangible expression, if not its mouth-piece, was the Liverpool Office, established at the same time as Canning was elected, to act as a liaison between the various Liverpool mercantile interests, the American merchants not excepted, and the government. To this function the Office came to add a vast amount of patronage, and as a factor in procuring the return of a succession of 'mercantile Tory' candidates was of no small account⁽⁹⁶⁾. As the authority of the Office grew and Canning proved a more than trustworthy champion of the town's commercial interests, the power of the Liverpool Whigs declined into insignificance, and the successive elections of the next twenty years only served to underline their political impotence. On more than one occasion their very survival as an organized party seemed in question.

During the last years of the war and the period of distress which followed, the energies of the Liverpool Whigs were taken up in charitable works and the current economic debate rather than in politics. Egerton Smith's Night Asylum founded in 1816 elicited the support of most Liverpool Dissenters, and the same year a meeting of Liverpool reformers heard Dr. Shepherd plead for the abandonment of political agitation in view of the terrible burden of pauperism⁽⁹⁷⁾. Till 1819 moreover when a legal defect in their position was detected, and they were over-ridden by the Overseers of the Poor, Rathbone and others were firmly entrenched on the Select Vestry, tried to apply the principles of the late Dr. Currie and almost earned for Liverpool the reputation of being the model urban parish so far as a properly planned welfare programme was concerned⁽⁹⁸⁾. Roscoe ventured in another direction, and in 1819 to support the efforts of Romilly and Mackintosh wrote his 'Observations on

Penal Jurisprudence', pleading for the amelioration of the criminal code, especially as it affected the poor.

Such activity however should not be allowed to disguise the fact that the 'commercial Whigs' were finding in Canning (whom they always interviewed on their numerous deputations to the capital) an adequate spokesman for their several interests. Thus George Booth, though he joined in the usual middle-class complaint about the high level of taxation, the size of the National Debt etc., found Canning's policy exactly suited to his tastes, and strongly defended complete protection for British agriculture⁽⁹⁹⁾. Fletcher adopted an even more conservative attitude, when, placing himself in 1821 at the head of the West India interest, he produced a pamphlet strongly defending slavery and attacking Cropper and the 'abolitionist' East India merchants. The following year he moved an affectionate address to Canning whose efforts on behalf of the better treatment for negroes had not led him to deny the validity of the institution itself⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

It was not until the 1820's however that Liverpool Whiggism came to the verge of losing its identity altogether, and during the years of post-war distress from 1815-20 nearly all local reformers found a natural home in the Concentric Society, one of those numerous 'charitable, convivial and political' clubs which controlled the political destinies of the town at this time⁽¹⁰¹⁾. The Concentric Society was founded the same year, 1812, as the Liverpool Mercury, and one of its founder members was Egerton Smith, the radical newspaper's first proprietor and editor. The emblem of concentric circles showed, according to Shepherd, that all types of reformist opinion were included within the society⁽¹⁰²⁾. Nearly all members however were men of substance, for it included not merely the Unitarian businessmen-politicians, Roscoe, Rathbone, Smith, Colonel Williams, Ottiwell Wood, his son, John, (M.P. for Preston, 1826-32), Crompton, Preston, Peter Wood the attorney, Yates, Booth and Heywood, but Dr. Shepherd, its real leader, and Tom Leyland, the millionaire banker and slave-owner. Till 1817 its activities proceeded peacefully and unmolested, but in that year ominous signs of governmental displeasure appeared, Rathbone was visited by a spy and asked to sign a bogus petition which he refused to do⁽¹⁰³⁾, the society was threatened with suppression by Sidmouth but called a special meeting to protest its loyalty and so escaped, while one or two members were reported to Castlereagh as 'dangerous, but have done nothing as yet'. The Concentrics survived till 1822 and re-emerge again in 1831 as the Liverpool Parliamentary Union.

The chief duty undertaken by the Concentrics was of course the contesting of successive elections in the Whig-interest, and three of these fell within the period of its existence, in 1816, 1818 and 1820. For the election of 1816 caused by Canning's appointment as Treasurer to the Board of Control for India, the Concentrics chose Leyland, an Anglican, as their champion. Shepherd was in charge of the campaign, and Rathbone was its treasurer. The contest opened in grand style, with Tory squibs referring to a meeting at 'The Pandemonium, Paradise Street' where 'Parson Yates introduced a motion that Truth is Libel' ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾, attacking a comparative newcomer who was particularly active in this election:-

'Crompton the brewer too! A man of fault,
A Democrat of great notorious sin,
Mixes with bitter, noxious herbs his malt,
And with a Presbyterian smile can stir them in' ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾,
and referring to a notorious Unitarian divine as:

'A shepherd fit no wholesome flock to keep,
A shepherd far more rotten than his sheep' ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. The voting however went so overwhelmingly in Canning's favour that Rathbone persuaded Leyland to stand down when he had received only 738 votes to his opponent's 1280. In vain had the Whigs endeavoured once more to rally the independent Freemen against 'a few rich and aristocratical merchants headed by John Gladstone who want only to fill their own pockets' ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

Two years later with a general election impending, the Whigs selected a far stronger candidate in the person of Lord Sefton whom the Tories would of course find it harder to assail. Though the election was confused, there being at one time no less than twenty-one nominal candidates ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾, it was remarkably orderly, a fact due in no small measure to the noble bearing and staunch resolve of the heir of Croxteth and his Dissenting supporters, Shepherd, once again the principal agent, and Booth and Heywood, his chief financial backers. Sefton stood for 'moderate constitutionalism', as against both the wild radicalism of the universal suffrage, annual parliament men and the 'Oliver system' of the Tories. Only once in an injudicious reference to Hone did he give his opponents opportunity to attack him as 'a patron of scriptural parody and blasphemy' ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾: rather he drew enthusiastic support from the freemen whom the Whigs urged to abandon their 'timid acquiescence with the will of your employers' ⁽¹¹⁰⁾. One factor alone made for the noble

Lord's undoing: the refusal of the Heywoods, Booths, Earles and Nicholas Waterhouse to countenance bribery, most especially of the liquid variety. (The Dissenters as usual 'thought more of promoting independence of feeling and principle than Lord Sefton's return'⁽¹¹¹⁾). The result was now inevitable, Sefton receiving 1280 votes to Canning's 1654 and Gascoyne's 1444.

The election of 1818 left Shepherd bewildered and dispirited. 'I see our party are completely gulled', he wrote. 'I am glad I am not on the spot. I will wash my hands of politics'. Especially was he disgusted with the unfortunate platform appearances of the Wavertree physician. He trusted that he would never live to see another election 'à la Crompton'⁽¹¹²⁾. Oddly enough however when in 1820 another general election was fought, Crompton and the experienced Leyland were adopted to challenge the sitting candidates. Once again the Liverpool Dissenters had one of their own party in the electoral field. From the start it was apparent that Leyland whose candidature was half-hearted was as certain of defeat as Gascoyne was of victory. In the contest therefore the names of these two were rarely heard, and the whole affair resolved itself into a clash between Canning and the queer, short-sighted, hunch-backed physician.

Crompton who had previously sought nomination at Derby, Nottingham and Preston, was only too pleased to accept the Liverpool challenge, even though it was only his Dissenting friends who invited him - the Whig 'respectables' held back from a wild radical whose name was often linked with Thistlewood's, who stirred up to an unparalleled extent the antagonism between the freemen and their employers, committed himself 'eventually' to universal suffrage and annual parliaments, who declared that Canning intended to thrust him into prison for his political views, and whom Canning advised his supporters to reject because he lacked that 'situation, property and influence' necessary for the representation of Liverpool⁽¹¹³⁾. A repetition of the 1806 contest seemed likely, but once again the radical candidate compromised his chances by excessive fussiness over electoral corruption, carrying his purity campaign to the extent of tendering to every voter the oath disclaiming bribery. The contest soon became a hopeless one, and Crompton in despair removed to Lancaster to assist the candidature of his Unitarian friend, Colonel Williams. The result was now a foregone conclusion, Canning and Gascoyne receiving 1635 and 1552 votes respectively to Crompton's 345 and Leyland's 125.

Advanced as they may have been, the political programmes of middle-class reformers such as Roscoe and Crompton were definitely for rather than of the people, but in the years of Tory repression the Unitarian community in

Liverpool did throw up a notorious democrat who added a touch of sparkle to the radical politics of the town. John Wright, a poor school-master⁽¹¹⁴⁾, was the brother of Richard Wright, the Unitarian missionary, and of F.B. Wright, master printer, seatholder of Renshaw Street Chapel and opponent of social and moral abuses in the town. As early as 1806 in association with S.W. Ryley, the Quaker, he had been conducting a debating society called the 'Forum' in the Long Room in Marble Street, but this had been closed by the Mayor in the interests of public order. In 1812 however in opposition to the moderate Concentric Club, Wright founded an Independent Debating Society which admitted women members and which in successive sessions denounced Authority local and national in unmeasured terms, 'reptiles, insects, grasshoppers, mitred locusts, bigoted snails which bedaub with slime and filth every character they crawl over'. Debates in 1816 on wages, suitable penalties for seduction and 'Is Rebellion against Tyrants Obedience to God?' at last provoked the wrath of the local magistrates, and the Society 'deemed it prudent to dissolve'. Wright could not however be muzzled, and in the Mercury of March 28th 1817 announced that he would give a Unitarian lecture in Marble Street in two days' time. The meeting was duly held and on information received from Mr. Reece Davies, a deacon of Great George St. Independent Chapel, Wright was indicted on a double charge of conducting worship in unlicensed premises and blasphemy, the presiding magistrate having actually initiated the prosecution. This curious action was brought to the attention of the House of Lords by Lord Holland who described it as 'unusual and illegal', the bishop of Chester however upholding the legality of the proceedings. Eventually Wright who persisted in holding his meetings throughout his successive trials and appeals was fined 20/- on the first charge and acquitted on the second. The author of this local cause célèbre a few years later emigrated to America where he died.

Shortly after the election of 1820 had been decided and the furore over the John Wright case had eventually died down, the Liverpool Dissenters who for the past few years had met periodically to condemn successive acts of government intolerance, the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1817, Peterloo in 1819, official indifference to the terrible Orange and Green riots in Liverpool the same year, assembled for what transpired to be their last united meeting of protest for the next ten years. The sufferings of the unfortunate Queen Caroline drew a large crowd to the York Hotel where, with Mr. Thomas Booth in the chair, a 'Friends of Liberty and Law' committee was formed with Ottiwell Wood as chairman, and a great procession held through the streets wherein

appeared most of the prominent Unitarian seatholders and even Thomas Fletcher who, taking part with the radicals for the one and only occasion in his life, was moved to do so because of 'his indignation at the way the poor lady had been treated' ⁽¹¹⁵⁾. The procession produced a certain amount of tension between Church and Dissent, for the former had strongly supported the king ⁽¹¹⁶⁾, and political and religious tensions at the School for the Blind Institution led to Crompton, Yates and Wood all resigning from that body in protest at the indignities they had received from the Rev. Edward Hall, the Anglican chaplain ⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

Nevertheless, despite this temporary upset, Shepherd, writing in the Monthly Magazine for December 1820 could laud the town of Liverpool for its commercial strength, conviviality, liberality and toleration. Here was no such persecution of Dissenters and Reformers as was found 'in a neighbouring town', no 'social excommunication', 'nor does the orthodox churchman shun an intimacy with the conscientious Dissenter'. The decade of partially restored prosperity and Liberal Toryism seemed to be opening in Liverpool on a note of self-congratulation and complacency such as might spell ruin to the continued existence of an independent Whig opposition.

Never in fact were the Liverpool Whigs quite so impotent as in the 1820's. The economic writings in which the Unitarians among them indulged in this decade ⁽¹¹⁸⁾ the extension of their business interests into cotton broking, banking and insurance and the great struggle over the Liverpool-Manchester railway (when Rathbone, Cropper and the Booths, the chief promoters, joined by John Gladstone and supported at Westminster by Lord Brougham, fought a successful battle with the Corporation, the Earl of Derby and the Earl of Sefton whose spokesman, oddly enough, was Greevy ⁽¹¹⁹⁾) seem in retrospect a substitute for political action. The same reformers met periodically, now in the very moderate Cheshire Whig Club of which, since it was 'highly respectable' even Thomas Fletcher was happy to be a member: they are found in 1822 thanking Hume for his services to retrenchment and economy (it would almost seem that so long as Hume and his small band of radicals were at Westminster to act as guardians of their consciences the Liverpool Dissenters did not contemplate political activity on their own account): in 1824 they were petitioning successfully for recognition for the South American republics and urging the Tories to adopt a sliding scale for corn, while a year later they welcomed the Irish Catholic delegates to Liverpool ⁽¹²⁰⁾.

In 1823 Huskisson had been returned as member for Liverpool in succession to Canning with the support both of the Tories and the 'commercial Whigs'. Only a few irreconcilables led by Crompton contemplated a contest, but the result,

Huskisson 236 votes, Lord Molyneux 31 and Crompton nil, proved conclusively that what lingering doubts the Whig merchants entertained about Canning were now entirely swept away in the universal enthusiasm for his widely acclaimed successor⁽¹²¹⁾. The election of 1826 was not contested by the Whigs at all, but is not without interest, for the poorer freemen, the shipwrights especially, were angry that Huskisson had voted for the amendments to the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1825, while General Gascoyne, the most reactionary of Tories, had taken a contrary stand! A most confused situation now developed, as the independent freemen persuaded Major Gascoyne (Tory) and John Wright (Radical) to stand for them, while most political dissenters either remained silent or, following the advice of the Liverpool Mercury, supported Huskisson. Polling lasted only two hours, but the result, Huskisson 113, General Gascoyne 103, Major Gascoyne 13 and Wright 3 underlined only too clearly the extent to which the Liverpool Whigs had now abandoned their time-honoured championship of the rights of the independent freemen⁽¹²²⁾. The following year saw a complete sell-out to the now dominant Liberal Toryism, as William Shepherd seconded at a public meeting a motion applauding the formation of Canning's ministry, and supporting the latter's attitude to the Corn Laws. A year later when Huskisson on his elevation to the colonial secretaryship had to contest his Liverpool seat, Shepherd publicly declared that he should not be opposed, and expressed himself fully able to bear 'the stings of those insects' i.e. the attacks of a few radical irreconcilables who reminded him that he had not always thus dishonoured his radical principles⁽¹²³⁾. At the General Election of 1830 the Unitarian divine actually appeared in support of Huskisson on the hustings⁽¹²⁴⁾.

It is hardly surprising in view of this general apathy that the Liverpool contribution to the repeal of the Tests in 1828 was minimal. The original meeting to which all Dissenters were invited by the two Unitarian congregations was attended by only two representatives (both Baptists) from the inert mass of orthodox Nonconformity⁽¹²⁵⁾. Once again therefore the burden of securing the last major amelioration of their grievances was left to the Unitarians, and a petition was drawn up by Hincks, Booth and Thomas Thornley M.P. (still a seat-holder at Renshaw Street). Perhaps it was no coincidence that the petition was presented in Parliament by the ever accommodating Huskisson⁽¹²⁶⁾.

One looks in vain in this decade for the Liverpool Dissenters displaying any of the righteous indignation or moral fervour which had inspired them in the past. There is of course Cropper's revival of the anti-slavery agitation in 1821 (at a time when the whole movement was moribund) in a series of letters

to Wilberforce, his leading a deputation on the subject to Parliament in August 1822, his founding of the Liverpool Society for the Abolition of Slavery in October of the same year, and the inspiration he thus provided for the establishment of the more famous London anti-slavery Society⁽¹²⁷⁾. But even this campaign lacked the solidarity and the determination of former radical movements, for Cropper was deeply affected by the hostility of Fletcher, and subject to spirited attacks from the West India interest which pointed out only too convincingly how as Liverpool's largest importer of East Indian sugar he had only too obvious an interest in the economic ruination of the Carribean Islands. Cropper did not help his cause (and seriously embarrassed his fellow abolitionists) by basing his case on both high moral principles and the shrewdest calculations of self-interest, and the dull, ponderous arguments which he inflicted on the readers of the Liverpool Mercury in the autumn of 1823 were ably controverted by the sparkling, malicious replies of John Gladstone in the Courier. By this time however Cropper and the East India interest had been completely outmanoeuvred by Canning who at the instigation of the West Indian merchants proposed considerable social reforms in his famous Memorandum, while avoiding reference to the sugar question altogether. By 1824 Cropper had been as effectively silenced as had the remaining Whig Dissenters of the town⁽¹²⁸⁾.

(3) A Time of Enterprise (1830-41)

That the fortunes of the Reform party in Liverpool, at their nadir in 1830 had reached their zenith five years later is an undeniable fact, but one which is hardly explicable in terms of the local situation. In the 1830's as never before events in Liverpool responded to and reflected the trends of national politics, and the sudden triumph and gradual waning of the Whig cause in Liverpool coincides almost exactly with the varying fortunes of the party at Westminster.

For about a year before the Whig triumph of 1830 a number of meetings, held in Liverpool, had been expressive of a profound discontent among both the freemen and the voteless middle-classes. Several gatherings of the former, presided over by Rathbone and Shepherd in 1829 had voiced disapproval of the unreformed Corporation and demanded a Common Hall, while there was a marked revival of agitation against the East India Company and great rallies were addressed by the leading Liverpool opponents of the India monopoly, William Rathbone, Cropper and Samuel Hope, ~~while~~ In July 1830 a meeting to welcome the Paris revolution was harangued by the same group of Dissenting activists, and the relevance of events in France to the contemporary situation in Britain vividly underlined. The election of October 1830 proved however that the Liverpool

reformers had much lost ground to make up before success was in their grasp. Gascoyne and Huskisson, having again been nominated, a few of his friends persuaded the Unitarian Colonel Williams to oppose them in the Whig interest, but Williams was compelled to withdraw after only two hours when he had received a mere 93 votes to Gascoyne's 191 and Huskisson's 188. A few days later however Huskisson was killed, and in November 1830 Liverpool was once again pitched into the turbulence of a bitterly contested election.

Not the least peculiar feature of the contest of November 1830 was that the two contenders for Huskisson's seat were both Whigs who had been at Eton together. The Tories, having in vain tried to secure Sir Charles Grant as their candidate, adopted J.E. Denison who, though a Whig, was an ardent admirer of Canning and Huskisson and proudly boasted that he stood in their tradition. The Whig leaders at once retaliated by selecting William Ewart, the son of a Liverpool Scots merchant and grandson of a Presbyterian minister, though he himself was an Anglican. Ewart too paid the conventional tributes to the two recently deceased Liverpool members, while disclaiming any association with the Huskisson 'junta' which had nominated Denison. In reality Ewart was by far the more radical of the two, being a disciple of Hume, and pledging himself to far more precise reforms than those vaguely outlined by his opponent, especially on the questions of parliamentary reform, the Corn and Game Laws, slavery abolition, and the India monopoly. Denison suffered from the fact that he was a stranger hailing from the Dukeries, 'a block of Portland Stone', who was suspected of secretly favouring the landed aristocracy. Ewart moreover made great play of the fact that he had the suffrages of the 'independent freemen' and in particular of John Wright, by now almost a legendary figure in democratic circles⁽¹²⁹⁾. A Tory squib which refers scoffingly to the kind of support Ewart was receiving mentions alongside two extremely wealthy Unitarian and one Presbyterian businessmen, an Irish Catholic and a Unitarian radical who were soon to be associated in Owenite communitarian ventures:-

Supported by Falvey with Irish oration

By Preston (poor Bob) and Rathbone's queer pinch,

By Duncan Gibb's grand recitation,

And labourers headed by Finch⁽¹³⁰⁾.

Though Parson Shepherd, the 'sly Quaker of Cornhill' (Ryley) and 'the king of the black nation' (Cropper) were all mercilessly satirized by the Tories, the role of the Dissenters in this election was surprisingly small, the burden of Ewart's campaign being borne by James Branker, a Tory merchant. Soon it became

clear why this was so, for the contest between Ewart's 'blue' party and Denison's 'reds' turned out to be the most shamefully corrupt in Liverpool's history, each candidate paying between £20 and £50 for every vote received, and Ewart's bill alone totalling £65,000. As early as the seventh day of the campaign J.B. Yates, a supporter of Ewart, announced he would not vote because of this scandalous corruption, and advised others to do likewise⁽¹³¹⁾, and a little later Richard Rathbone issued a public protest against the drunken debauchery of the contest. In the long run it was these stirrings of the Nonconformist conscience which were far more significant than the actual result of the poll, wherein Ewart defeated Denison by 2215 to 2186.

The election of Ewart was followed by a confused period of six months during which on the one hand an outraged 'purity' party definitely emerged with William Rathbone at its head, and on the other eager radicals with fewer moral scruples heartily joined in the nation-wide reform agitation. Though on 13th December Rathbone and a body of prominent citizens formally petitioned parliament, protesting against the election, it was undoubtedly the latter group which attracted far more public sympathy. The first great Reform meeting was held in Liverpool on 14th December 1830, and was addressed by all the prominent Whig leaders. Unanimity was not reached however on the question of the ballot which Mr. Thomas Blackburn, the Congregationalist, opposed; Another Reform meeting on April 27th 1831 (from which Rathbone was conspicuously absent) was more enthusiastic as William Earle, W.W. Currie, T. Thornley, Shepherd and Col. Williams all lauded the efforts of their champion, Ewart, in the promotion of reform. (Unfortunately Ewart was no longer M.P. for Liverpool, having thanks to Rathbone's efforts been unseated for bribery by a select committee of the House of Commons a month previously).;

His disgrace did not however prevent the stalwart radical from presenting himself for re-election, along with Denison, when parliament was dissolved in May of the same year. The contest of June 1831 was brief and unremarkable. The veteran Gascoyne, now very old and unpopular, had just made one of his very rare Commons speeches when he formally moved the rejection of the Reform Bill; not unexpectedly he was now decisively beaten, receiving only 607 votes to Ewart's 1919 and Denisons 1890. For the first time in her history Liverpool was represented by two Whigs. What was noteworthy about the contest - an uncorrupt and unexciting affair compared with the previous one - was the action of Rathbone and his purity campaigners. To further his ends Rathbone had presented himself as a bogus candidate, demanding successfully that the town be divided into separate polling districts with booths in each one, thus reducing

the length of the contest and the attendant bribery and debaucheries. As alarmed Whigs who tried to dissuade Rathbone pointed out⁽¹³²⁾, nothing could have been more nicely calculated to irritate the independent freemen who in addition failed to appreciate Rathbone's pompous moralisings about the larger profits their employers and the larger wages they themselves would enjoy as a result of the triumph of Reform, or the extent of their previous perversity and corruption. The Rathbone conscience was driving a deep wedge between the local Whig party and its erstwhile working-class supporters.

Though Liverpool had seen three contested elections within the space of nine months, yet another now impended as a result of Denison's having been returned for both Liverpool and Nottinghamshire in June 1831 and his decision to sit for the latter rather than for the expensive Lancashire constituency. An ungenerous Whig parliament, despite the efforts of Ewart to secure a writ appeared however more concerned to punish the wrongdoers of November 1830 than to secure a second representative for the town, and the purity party registered a great success when in September 1831 a bill (subsequently postponed because of the Reform agitation) was introduced into Parliament by Mr. J. Bennet in an effort to disfranchise the corrupt freemen. Not till October was a writ finally granted, and a contest held between Lord Sandon for the Tories and Thomas Thornley for the Whigs. Thornley, a Liverpool merchant and advanced Whig of the same school as Ewart, by whom he was supported, was as a Unitarian, too closely associated with the Rathbones to enjoy any chance of success among the independent freemen. In any case his radical attitude to the Corn Laws, the ballot and shorter parliaments alienated the more moderate Whigs who rallied to Viscount Sandon. Despite all the reforming fervour then abroad, the freemen voted almost as a man for the Tory, giving him 1519 votes to Thornley's 670. Discerning people might have read into this novel Tory-working class rapprochement a new alignment of forces fraught with menace for the otherwise jubilant Whigs.

There followed a year of agitation and reform meetings of all kinds. Not merely were the energies of Dissenters taken up with the Liverpool Parliamentary Union and the Reform Bill; a lecture by the Rev. William Knibb in Byrom Street chapel on 24th July revived the anti-slavery agitation also, and a certain 'Presbyter', writing in the Mercury, kept the slave question before the public unremittingly from May to December. Sometimes in fact Dissenters were torn between divided loyalties, an anti-slavery lecture by George Thompson in September 1832 for example clashed with a Reform Dinner at the amphitheatre

under the chairmanship of the Rev. Dr. Shepherd⁽¹³³⁾. Other issues were not however forgotten. Mr. John Bennet kept the question of Liverpool corruption constantly before the House of Commons, and a great debate raged on whether or not under the new Reform Bill the freemen should be disfranchised. Middle-class Dissenters, many of whom would soon be given the vote, were only too anxious to see the abuse ended, though Fletcher, as usual, clung to the tried system. Sandon naturally championed the freemen, Ewart steered clear of the issue as carefully as he could. Eventually of course the freeman franchise thanks largely to Sandon's efforts was retained, and though the total number of Liverpool electors was raised to 11,000, the 4,000 odd freemen would still play a decisive role in local politics.

Not unsurprisingly the first election under the new system, that of December 1832, was both bitterly contested, and also one of the most memorable in Liverpool history. The Tories' champions were Sandon, a moderate who enjoyed the support of both the freemen and of conservative Whigs, and Sir Howard Douglas, an old soldier and extreme reactionary, pledged to defend the Church, the slave system and the proper influence of property. Amongst his backers two erstwhile reformers, Thomas Leyland and Duncan Gibb, were prominent. Ewart who had by now made his name in parliament as an outspoken critic of capital punishment was the natural Whig choice, but the selection of a second reform candidate was more difficult. Eventually Thornley was again persuaded to stand. Thornley who adopted the same radical programme as during his previous candidature was supported in the main by younger, newly enfranchised and often orthodox Nonconformists - Samuel Hope, Edward Caerns, Thomas Blackburn and Cropper, the older Unitarian Dissenters, Preston, Shepherd, Currie, Col. Williams and Freme, tended to prefer the more experienced Ewart to their more advanced coreligionist⁽¹³⁴⁾. Thornley's nomination at once released a torrent of anti-Dissenting polemic which even rebounded on Ewart who, though an Anglican, was a keen advocate of church reform. One malicious Tory placard purporting to be issued by the Unitarians proposed the confiscation of all parish churches for atheistical purposes and all Wesleyan chapels for the Catholics. (Both parties were appealing for the support of the newly enfranchised Methodists). Another leaflet entitled 'Down with All Unbelievers' appealed for the rejection of the 'ambitious radical and his Unitarian gang'⁽¹³⁵⁾, and reminded the freemen that the same clique had referred to them as 'trash whose very name stank in their nostrils'. But their chief complaint against the 'Christless Christian' was that Thornley enjoyed American citizenship,

having been given the same by the state of Maryland. Against all this Thornley's spirited denunciations of Sandon as the nephew of a bishop, the representative of the Church 'with its iniquitous tithe system' and Douglas as the 'representative of the standing army, the deadweight and the pension list',⁽¹³⁶⁾ were of no avail. Ewart headed the poll with 4931 votes, followed by Sandon with 4260, Thornley with 4096 and Douglas with 3249.

Thornley's speech on his rejection was peevish and ill-tempered and reflected the annoyance of the Nonconformist body that the continuance of the freeman franchise had prevented the election of their own nominee⁽¹³⁷⁾. The result was that Rathbone redoubled his efforts to persuade parliament to disfranchise the freemen once and for all. Spurred on by Rathbone, Henry Roscoe and Lawrence Harvey who travelled to London to give evidence at the bar of the House of Commons, the Select Committee in July 1833 at last reported on the facts in the recent Liverpool elections, including the most recent wherein there had been 'slight but decisive bribery',⁽¹³⁸⁾. At once Rathbone placarded the town with 'A Statement of Facts showing the Justice of the Liverpool Bill',⁽¹³⁹⁾, but this son of the freemen's idol was only hissed when he exhorted the Liverpool workingmen 'to raise themselves in the scale of society and by habits of industry, order and economy obtain as householders the political right of electing representatives'. Early in 1834 Rathbone who had spent a vast sum of money on promoting the bill had the disappointment of seeing it rejected by the House of Lords⁽¹⁴⁰⁾, but by that time other issues had arisen to gain the attention of Liverpool's Reform leaders.

1833 proved to be a hectic year. Two Whig measures, the abolition of slavery and the ending of the East India Company monopoly were greeted by most Dissenters with unconstrained delight as the first fruits of the Reform Bill struggle. Ewart's conduct in parliament, his pleas for the ballot, for criminal law reform, for the admission of Dissenters to the universities (for which he received a personal rebuke from Dr. Pusey himself⁽¹⁴¹⁾) and his support of the Poor Law Amendment Act were likewise approved: indeed during this year there is every indication that Liverpool was witnessing the emergence of a distinctive Political Dissent more broadly based (and less politically deft) than the Unitarian radicalism of the past. Meetings to criticise church rates, and to spur the Whig government to more energetic measures of church reform were begun this year, while the growing participation of Congregational and Baptist laymen in local politics was matched by the sudden appearance therein of the Dissenting parsons, Kelly for the Congregationalists, Saunders for the Baptists⁽¹⁴²⁾.

Hardly was the possibility of a Municipal Corporations Bill mooted than the same group foresaw another considerable extension of their political influence. Thomas Booth voiced their aspirations nicely when, giving evidence before the inquiry into the state of the corporation of Liverpool in 1833⁽¹⁴³⁾, he declared that Nonconformists being now more numerous in Liverpool than Anglicans demanded equal political rights with the Establishment. Rathbone and R.E. Harvey, now recovered from their previous parliamentary rebuff, were in the fray once again, collecting evidence in Liverpool, giving evidence in London and returning home amazed at the hostility of the Lords' to the intelligence and power of the middle-classes'⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

Certain distasteful happenings failed to deflate the buoyant confidence of the reformers. They might for example have noted how the Rev. Dr. Ralph in debates on Irish Church disestablishment throughout 1834 was aligning the Presbyterian community with the beleaguered Established Church (Mr. Duncan Gibb's conversion to Toryism was by no means freakish and uncharacteristic). Even more alarmingly the arrival in the town early in 1835 of the Rev. Hugh McNeile, a young Ulster clergyman and Orange extremist, was likewise ignored: even the formation a little later of the Liverpool Protestant Association, the first overt appearance of a militant working-class Protestant Toryism in the town with its appeal to all 'professing faith in the Holy Trinity, being members of or friendly to the Established Churches of England and Scotland' (an obvious bait for the Presbyterians and Wesleyans) passed unnoticed. A slight shock was administered by the general election of February 1835 where ecclesiastical issues figures prominently. Sandon for the Tories, while pledging himself to abolish any real dissenting grievances, would not pull down the National Church, 'a missionary institution for establishing instruction through every corner of the land', and grimly reminded his audiences that the Reform Bill was only an experiment which could be cancelled at any moment. Douglas was much stronger for Church, King and the liberties of freeborn Englishmen, and refused any concessions in the way of church reform. Ewart was as usual the expert trimmer, taking care not to offend anyone, and dwelling on his recent parliamentary nostrums, the abolition of military flogging, and some form of local elective government for each county. The second Whig choice, a London merchant by the name of Morris but a keen supporter of church reform, was less discreet. His promises to work for the opening of the Universities to the Dissenters, and to redistribute the church's revenues were greeted with hisses and groans. Rathbone had made the very name of Dissent an object of popular

derision. After his injudicious opening remarks, Morris could scarcely be heard throughout the rest of the campaign⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. Not unexpectedly he finished bottom of the poll with 3627 votes, but Ewart was now relegated to second place with 4075 to Sandon's 4407 and Douglas' 3869. Traditional Toryism as early as 1835 was beginning once again to resume its ascendancy.

Throughout the rest of 1835 attention was focussed almost entirely on the Municipal Corporations Bill, and the last actions of the old Liverpool Corporation before its inevitable disappearance. IN June the Corporation, recognising in Nonconformity one of its most powerful foes, had offered concessions to 'conscientious Dissenters' provided that they would abstain from destructive attacks on its privileges. The offer was spurned with contempt⁽¹⁴⁶⁾. Another Reform meeting on 19th August dwelt almost exclusively on the grievances of Catholics and Dissenters under the old system, while on 16th September Lord Lyndhurst in the House of Lords spoke particularly of Liverpool where, were the Dissenters victorious in the municipal elections, they would be able to control the Corporation churches: he sought to insert a special clause into the bill, forbidding Nonconformist councillors to vote on this matter⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. In the Bill however it was laid down that the advowsons of the Corporation churches were to be sold, and so as not to leave the incumbents penniless, the old Corporation not unreasonably began to divert public revenues (rumoured to be approximately £105,000) to their support. At once the Liverpool Dissenters sprang to arms again to denounce the Corporation's action and 'the attempt to mortgage the citizen's property to enable their darling parsons to strut a little longer on borrowed plumage on the stage'⁽¹⁴⁸⁾. Thomas Bolton and others brought an action against the Corporation in the Court of Rolls, and Archdeacon Brooks hastened to London to defend what had been done. By the time the case was dismissed early in December, excitement in Liverpool was at fever pitch. The Reform Association had resolved to contest every seat in all the sixteen three-member wards into which the town had been divided, and in the greatly enlarged constituency (for by the act of 1835 the municipal boundary had been extended to embrace all the built-up areas of Liverpool and many surrounding villages as well) and in the absence of the hated freeman franchise with its ugly working-class/Tory alliance was carrying everything before it. In vain the Corporation fought a hopeless defensive action, alleging that all the Reform candidates were either Papists or Unitarians⁽¹⁴⁹⁾, while the ultra-Tory Standard (whose first editor had been dismissed for foolishly attacking the Wesleyans together with the mass of Dissenters) printed

a list of all the Reform candidates with their denominations attached, showing how all were enemies of the Church, the majority being Nonconformists, and the majority of these Unitarians⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. When the election was held on Boxing Day 1835, the result was staggering even to the most sanguine of the Reformers, for they had won a total of 43 seats to the Tories' five. For the first time in its history the town's affairs were to be controlled by a reform party, and more particularly by a body of radical 'Dissenters.

In his election address to the householders of the Lime Street ward Rathbone had actually promised the 'Millenium' should the Reformers be returned⁽¹⁵¹⁾, and during the six years in which, despite the steady whittling away of their majority, they actually retained control of the Council, much was done under the successive mayoralities of Currie, Rathbone, Bolton and the Liberal Anglicans Walmsley, Earle and Hugh Hornby vastly to improve conditions within the town. Though the Tories still exercised power through the Select Vestry which had not been abolished, the Reformers were during these years responsible for the introduction of a new police force, of a Health Committee which superseded a number of old ad hoc bodies and prepared the ground for the work of Dr. Duncan in the ensuing decade and in general of the whole nucleus of a salaried civil service in place of the extravagant patronage of the old system⁽¹⁵²⁾. Thanks also largely to the initiative of W.W. Currie, the Edinburgh University-educated Unitarian merchant who was the first mayor under the new régime, the old rule of secret debates was finally destroyed for Currie was wont to send full reports of all Council proceedings to the Liverpool Mercury after each session⁽¹⁵³⁾.

The new Council was not however remembered for this 'silent revolution' in municipal affairs but for the terrible and destructive controversy provoked when in an excess of reforming zeal the Whigs tried to introduce the Irish system of education into the Corporation schools, and make them available to children of all denominations, including Roman Catholics. This 'crucial experiment', the subject of a recent exhaustive monograph⁽¹⁵³⁾ needs no re-telling, except in so far as it represented the first major effort of a newly-self-conscious political Dissent to dictate terms to the town and the violent Orange/Tory reaction it provoked marked its equally decisive rejection by the Protestant working classes and their clerical and mercantile leaders. There was every reason why in 1836 William Rathbone and Thomas Blackburn, the two Dissenters most intimately concerned with educational reform should have imagined their task to be an easy one. Not only did they believe that Dissenters

in the town were now more numerous than Anglicans; as long ago as 1824 a pamphlet written by the Rev. W. Hesketh entitled 'An Appeal to the Clergy and Laity of Liverpool' had revealed that Dissenters were in their 37 day and Sunday schools educating no less than 8550 children⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ compared to the Anglicans' 3547 and the Catholics 910. Since then, admittedly, there had been only two new dissenting schools built (Hanover (1832) and Claremont (1835)), and the Report of the Manchester statistical Society on the state of education in Liverpool produced in 1836 showed that while the Church then had 27 Sunday schools with 6318 scholars, and Dissent 46 schools with 8350 scholars, as far as day schools were concerned, the Church had pulled ahead with 8499 scholars compared to the Dissenters' 3598, the Catholics' 1376 and the Corporation's 1216⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. Nevertheless Dissenters could confidently assume that their past achievements as well as their overwhelming council majority justified them in the course they were pursuing.

Their disillusionment was due not merely, as Dr. Murphy seems to suggest, to the alarmist cries of 'the church in danger' voiced by the McNeile party, the Reformers' deliberate alienation of the town's Evangelical clergy and a consequent anti-Popery scare, or to the popular belief that they were excluding the bible from the Corporation schools and introducing a completely secular education, and the ensuing violent conduct of the Protestant and Tradesmen's Conservative Associations. Only second in importance to these factors was the failure of organized Dissent in these years (a rather uncomfortable time for Nonconformity nationally⁽¹⁵⁶⁾) to give their political spokesmen the forthright and consistent backing which alone would have guaranteed success.

Politically Liverpool Dissent in the later 1830's provides a sorry spectacle of fragmentation and sectarian bitterness. At least four divergent attitudes are apparent. In the first place there is what a recent historian has called the 'retreat into voluntaryism'. Perhaps Blackburn himself was responsible for this: his powerful 'Defence' of the Irish system produced in 1836 contained scathing comments on the Church of England which he denounced as 'Popery in its worst and most injurious form, though under another name' and provoked not only a furious outburst of Anglican hostility but also forced Dissent to adopt a more narrowly defined defensive position. Blackburn's cue was taken up by his fellow Congregationalist, the Rev. Kelly, the real protagonist of voluntaryism in Liverpool. Kelly's 'Voluntary support of the Christian Ministry' (1838), a bitter personal attack on McNeile, confused the anti-state church and education issues inextricably: the latter was now

defined in sectarian terms embarrassing and unwelcome to those Liberal leaders still anxious to present their party programme as devoid of denominational bias and simply as a measure of civic reform from which all town dwellers would benefit. With the formation of the Liverpool Voluntary Church Society a little later Kelly completed the destructive work which his earlier quarrel with McNeile had begun⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

Secondly many prominent Liverpool Dissenters had been lukewarm towards the educational project from the start, and many more turned against it as soon as they realised the extent of the popular hostility it had provoked. As early as 1836 John Cropper, one of the new councillors, advised the abandonment of the project and the closure of the schools, and Blackburn had to reassure his anxious supporters that the Dissenters of Liverpool really were behind the Corporation. Next year however the Rev. Alexander Campbell was able to point to Raffles and Lister among others as having 'failed to conform to the Irish system'⁽¹⁵⁸⁾. By 1839 Dissenting support had waned to such an extent that the Anglican Evangelicals could actually make a bid for their support against the Reformers by offering places for their children in the new Collegiate Institution⁽¹⁵⁹⁾, while 'safeguarding the rights of Dissenters' was one of the Tories' election cries in 1841!

Thirdly the issues were not clarified nor the cause of educational progress aided by the ambiguous attitude of the Rev. Dr. Shepherd. By this time Shepherd had become the leading Whig organizer for S.W. Lancashire and the apologist of the Whig government's measures to its local supporters. Anxiously Lord Holland wrote to him expressing the hope that the Dissenters would be 'reasonable' in their demands, and would co-operate with Erastian churchmen to thwart the High Church party⁽¹⁶⁰⁾, and requesting assistance in the choice of Lancashire J.P.'s⁽¹⁶¹⁾. Shepherd replied that he was doing his best to moderate the radicals' extreme demands, and expressed sympathy with Holland in his difficulties with 'that sneaking egoiste', 'that contemptible coal-dealer', Lord Durham⁽¹⁶²⁾. As far as the local situation was concerned Shepherd considered that he could best support the Ministry by defying the local Anglican Evangelicals (who were as hotly opposed to the Whigs' church reforms as the Oxford Tractarians), especially the attempts of the Rev. Mr. Buddicombe and others to rally their 'dissenting bretheren' to the Church in her hour of need⁽¹⁶³⁾, by defending the Corporation's educational reforms and commending them to the national legislature, and at the same time clamping down heavily on the incipient voluntarism of Kelly whom Shepherd described as having 'made many a dissenting henroost a field of blood'⁽¹⁶⁴⁾. It was these 'outrageous

demands' and the Dissenters' opposition to a moderate and sensible policy which Shepherd believed to be the real reason for the Tory recovery of the later '30's⁽¹⁶⁵⁾.

Finally to the Reformers' dismay a large number of Dissenters, not merely content with a neutral position, actually elected to throw in their lot with the reviving fortunes of the local Tory party. At a great Protestant rally held on 13th July 1836 not only did Dr. Ralph speak for the Scots Presbyterians when he sympathised with a fellow Established church in the degradation she was suffering under the Whigs, but the Rev. James Dixon (Wesleyan) to thunderous applause prayed that 'the Church of England would be preserved in all its glory'⁽¹⁶⁶⁾. The attitude of the Wesleyans, several of whom secured election as Tories, capturing valuable Liberal seats from 1837 onwards was particularly vexatious. One Whig alderman referred to them as 'snivellers', while to the Mercury they were 'like spaniels which fawn the more they are beaten and abused' by their Tory overlords⁽¹⁶⁷⁾. Such detraction however only strengthened the Wesleyans in their prejudices.

As time passed, the ambivalence of the Dissenters became the least of the Reform Council's difficulties. The proposals of Mr. Eyre Evans, a Unitarian councillor, to extend the docks and erect warehouses around the new quays aroused considerable opposition and even drove Rathbone to vote with the Tories. The Whigs in an effort to retrieve their dying fortunes endeavoured to build up a Tradesmen's Reform Association to rival the Tory-working class organizations, but despite all Joshua Walmsley's efforts it was never a genuinely popular movement, and slowly wilted as its middle-class leaders failed to capture the popular imagination as the Tories were now doing so adeptly. In an increasingly anti-Catholic atmosphere moreover, the Whigs began to discover that their association with Romanists (three of whom had been elected to the reform council) ^{was} ~~were~~ more and more damaging to their electoral interests. Individual Unitarians were reminded of the role they had played in Catholic emancipation, that some of them had actually contributed to O'Connell's 'Catholic rent'⁽¹⁶⁸⁾, that Rathbone had walked arm-in-arm with the Irish leader through the Liverpool Exchange, that he had had the temerity to invite a Catholic priest to say grace at his mayoral banquet in 1837⁽¹⁶⁹⁾. Violence mounted as an Anti-Church Rates meeting held in May 1837 under the chairmanship of Samuel Hope and addressed by Blackburn, Rathbone and the Revs. Kelly and Carruthers for the Dissenters and by Richard Sheil and others for the Roman Catholics was broken up by an Orange party led by McNeile⁽¹⁷⁰⁾.

The 'Bible election', as the contest of 1837 was known from its pre-occupation with the Corporation Schools issue, was a severe blow to the reformers, Ewart having foolishly made a pact with O'Connell to secure the Kilkenny seat should Liverpool fail him, virtually made sure of his own defeat. His Whig colleague, Howard Elphinstone, an outsider and uncompromising free-trader who took as his symbol the 'big loaf' was likely to fare even worse. The Protestant Association enabled the two Tories to carry the day with ease, Lord Sandon receiving 4786 votes and Cresswell 4652 to Ewart's 4381 and Elphinstone's 4206. Blandly Joshua Walmsley attributed the Liberals' failure to want of knowledge, and advised the building of libraries and reading rooms to eliminate prejudice⁽¹⁷¹⁾. In 1840 Blackburn and Rathbone were both unseated in the municipal elections, and the reformers could now only await their inevitable eclipse. In 1841 13 out of the 16 wards returned Tory candidates, and the Liberals were driven into the political wilderness⁽¹⁷²⁾. Their discomfiture had been underlined yet again by the general election of 1841. Here Walmsley who had run into enormous difficulties as an Anglican supporter of the Corporation schools programme put himself forward as a candidate. Walmsley, a self-made corn broker who had been knighted and had removed his residence to Wavertree Hall in 1838, was a disciple of Cobden, an ardent free-trader and advocate of the entire programme of the Manchester school. As a parvenu he was snubbed by the local Whig Leaders despite his adding Lord Palmerston's name to his own as Whig candidates for the town. The Tories readily added the cry 'No Manchester dictation' to the now customary 'Church in danger', and Walmsley and Palmerston were heavily defeated. In high dudgeon the former followed the example of previously unsuccessful reform candidates such as Thornley and Ewart (now members for Wolverhampton and Wigan respectively) left Liverpool in 1843 and secured election for Bolton where presumably the free trade gospel would secure a better hearing. All three were not heard of in Liverpool again.

The 1830's had seen the Liverpool Whigs finally forfeit what little popular support they had ever enjoyed, and stand forth unashamedly as the political organ of the middle-classes. In this process Unitarians such as Rathbone had perhaps unconsciously played a major role, but it is nevertheless important to recall that it was during this same decade that the Rational Dissenters threw up another democratic idealist who stands in worthy succession to John Wright. John Finch adds a touch of light relief to the earnest political reformism of the 1830's. A consistent Unitarian (though he hailed the atheist Owen as his messiah, he was never attracted to secularism, and

remained a seatholder of two Unitarian chapels till his death) Finch first attained prominence in 1830 with his founding of the first Liverpool Co-operative and the first Liverpool Temperance Societies, as well as the first Dock labourers' Union. His 'Bee' newspaper (1832-3) was one of the most advanced organs of popular radicalism of the day, while to the Reformed Corporation he outlined in 1836 extensive plans for municipal housing and public parks, defending their schools programme in a pamphlet 'The Foolery of Sectarianism' in 1837. As a Poor Law Guardian he attacked Chadwick and the new Poor Law of 1834 while all the time he was slowly building up an Owenite community in the town, variously called the Social System Society or Christ's Apostles. Finch, who had a considerable working-class following, eventually opened his Hall of Science for lectures and rational entertainment in 1839, but by this time his socialism, theistic though it was⁽¹⁷³⁾, his Owenism and sympathy with the moral force Chartists (he had tried to persuade the Whigs to add universal suffrage, and the ballot and annual parliaments to their election programme in 1837) had made him suspect, and he was denounced in the columns of the Mercury. Now the self-styled 'Bishop of the New Moral World' abandoned Liverpool in despair, visited Harmony Hall and toured the Shaker and Mormon communities in the U.S.A. Incurably optimistic, he returned to Liverpool in 1851, transformed his family business into a co-operative foundry with the help of the A.S.E. and the Christian Socialists, and ruined himself by publishing a strange religious work, 'The Seven Seals Broke Open or The Bible of the Reformation Reformed', 'a version of the scriptures which will make all priests unnecessary'. Finch died in 1857, his millenarian hopes unextinguished, though the moral tone of mid-century Liverpool could have given him few grounds for such exaggerated optimism⁽¹⁷⁴⁾.

(4) Political Insignificance (1841-60)

The overwhelming Tory victory of 1841 and the growth of 'voluntaryism' seemed once again to have nullified Dissent as an effective force in Liverpool politics. Nonconformists, denied a leading role in civic affairs, resorted in the next two decades to a variety of pressure groups almost as a substitute for that municipal predominance of which they had been unceremoniously deprived. The first and most outspoken of these militant factions was the Liverpool branch of the Anti-Corn Law League which had already made a brief appearance in the election of 1841. The Liverpool League was, apart from Walmsley, one of its leading promoters, almost wholly Nonconformist in composition⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. Founded in Mr. Joseph King's office in 1839, its chief spokesmen were the Unitarians

Charles Holland, I.B. Cooke, T. Thornley M.P., H. Booth, O. Wood, R. Rathbone, C. Rawdon and H.W. Meade-King, while C.E. Rawlins, the recent convert from radical Methodism, was the honorary secretary. Unfortunately the local Whigs held aloof, and so too did Thomas Blackburn and William Rathbone, always rather hesitant where the full implementation of the Manchester programme was concerned. The League however never attained in Liverpool the degree of celebrity attaching to the Financial Reform Association which succeeded it in 1848.

In this instance a group of Liverpool businessmen meeting to extend and popularize the gospel of free-trade unwittingly launched a movement which developed branches in most other English cities. The origin of the Association was the commercial crisis of 1847 and the fear of a greatly increased expenditure on the armed forces⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. Its objects were firstly to substitute direct for indirect taxation⁽¹⁷⁷⁾, and secondly to promote complete free-trade. From the start, rejecting the pleas of Mr. Walmsley, it steered clear of the franchise question, a fact which accounts for the negative and diminishing role it played from the later '50's onwards, and its speedy abandonment by most of the Liberal leaders and especially by Cobden who had never been highly impressed by the abilities of its Liverpool sponsors. Charles Holland and R.V. Yates were its leading promoters, and among other members were Francis Boulton, 'the one local man who most closely impersonated Cobden'⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ and C.E. Rawlins. It was Boulton and Rawlins in fact who in 1848 brought the Association dramatically to the public's notice by appearing at a townsmeeting in the Amphitheatre called by the shipowning and shipbuilding interests (two groups totally unrepresented among the Financial Reformers) to oppose the final stage of the repeal of the Navigation Laws. Amidst terrible uproar from the old freemen and protectionist interest they moved and seconded a contrary amendment, voting on which was made impossible by the tumultuous circumstances prevailing⁽¹⁷⁹⁾. Haughty and rather self-conscious in its appeals to the working class for support, the Association, when once the renewed demand for franchise extension in the '60's dwarfed the economic issues on which it dwelt continually, became a kind of exclusive political salon, its members engulfing themselves in masses of statistics, blue books, pamphlets and reports. Nationally The Times deplored its attacks on royalty, the army and the aristocracy, locally the Porcupine was more scathing: the Reformers were no more than "a collection of fiscal fanatics whose sayings and doings have brought nothing but ridicule upon the town"⁽¹⁸⁰⁾. Even by the time of the Crimean War its influence was declining rapidly, and though later on it was revived by Samuel

Morley and as late as 1910 was able to stage a rally at Liverpool, on the occasion of its winding up in 1914 most people, even active Liberals, were unaware of its existence. With its negative, petty and brash propaganda and its incompetent leadership the Association had been one of the least useful manifestations of Liverpool's Political Dissent⁽¹⁸¹⁾. Others of these mid-Victorian pressure groups had an even more shadowy and less purposive existence. The Liverpool Freehold Land Society, designed to create 40/- freehold for electoral purposes had Charles Holland as its president, and Boulton, Rawlins, J.T. Crook, Robert Mather and the ubiquitous John Finch on its committee, but in its short life was as undistinguished as the local branch of Joseph Hume's Extension of the Suffrage movement whose supporters were virtually identical with those of the slightly younger body⁽¹⁸²⁾.

Of far more permanent significance than these various 'lobbies' was the developing sympathy of the Liberal leaders, Anglican Whigs and Dissenters alike, towards the claims of the Roman Catholic community. Shortly after the election of 1841 Mr. C. Bushell, the Tory educationalist, had scoffingly recommended the care of the Catholic children of the town to the 'wealthy and liberal dissenters' who would be only too pleased to cater for them⁽¹⁸³⁾. Shepherd and others had however taken him seriously, and one of the more curious results of the Liberal defeat of 1841 had been the erection of a number of new, exclusively Roman Catholic, schools built out of monies provided not only by Catholics themselves but by several prominent Unitarians and by the Earl of Sefton. The ties thus forged with the Catholic community were strengthened especially as the McNeile party grew more extreme the more firmly entrenched became the Tory party in the council chamber. In the early 1840's for example the Rathbones struck up their friendship with Fr. Matthew, the Irish temperance reformer, and in 1843 William Rathbone rather ostentatiously accompanied him to High Mass at St. Patrick's⁽¹⁸⁴⁾. A year later when the town council under its first Wesleyan mayor, Mr. Thomas Sands, refused in an embittered frame of mind to hang Rathbone's portrait in the mayoral gallery (it was not finally admitted till 1865), Rathbone added fuel to the flames by endeavouring to stop the recruitment of Orangemen to the local police force. In 1844 also he chaired a great meeting to celebrate the reversal of the judgement against O'Connell⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ which occasioned more popular demonstrations of hooting and hissing against the high-principled but tactless Liberal leader. In 1846 Rathbone took the lead in securing a Liverpool petition for the admission of Catholics to a government grant for education, and a year later Thom produced his famous 'Claims of Ireland'.

The events of 1846-8 however and the vast Irish emigration into Liverpool momentarily stifled even the Rathbones' idealism. Though, as he confessed, he had 'drunk in justice to Ireland with his mother's milk', William V was determined that Young Ireland should be crushed, and thought that 'we have great cause to complain' about the burden of poverty and suffering the immigrants were inflicting on the town⁽¹⁸⁶⁾. Soon his old equanimity had reasserted itself however, and Rathbone made himself responsible for the collection of monies for Irish relief not only in Liverpool but throughout the whole of England, eventually becoming agent, along with Fr. Matthew, for the relief collected in America also⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. Throughout the '50's fair treatment for Catholics remained a primary concern of Rathbone and his circle of friends. In 1854 he summoned a great town meeting to advocate against the McNeile party the relief of Catholics and Dissenters from certain oaths, and two years later Melly and Cropper on the Select Vestry brought to a successful conclusion a campaign on behalf of the Catholic inmates of the Liverpool workhouse⁽¹⁸⁸⁾. The Catholic community responded appropriately to these gestures, not least in the solid electoral support given to the Liberal party.

The Catholic vote was in fact by 1850 of considerable importance, but social classes whose electoral potential was very limited did not entirely escape the attention of the Nonconformist Liberals of the years. J.A. Picton for example, a Palmerstonian in most other respects, is found in the 1850's championing the idea of universal secular education, and founding a local branch of the Lancashire Public School Association, dedicated to this end⁽¹⁸⁹⁾. His campaign however is important chiefly as a foreshadowing of the educational debate of the 70's rather than because in the early 50's it stood any chance of adoption by the Liberal party either locally or nationally. Again Picton and John Cropper are to be found in one of the most useful, if largely forgotten, campaigns of the mid-century, that for shorter hours for shop assistants and Post Office workers⁽¹⁹⁰⁾, while a few years later P.M. Rathbone joined the Christian Socialists in their valuable work on behalf of Trade Unions. John Finch was indeed far from being the only local Dissenter of this period to display an active social concern⁽¹⁹¹⁾.

Politically the two decades of solid Tory rule which followed the exciting events of the later 1830's are extremely dull. During the long interval between the elections of 1841 and 1847⁽¹⁹²⁾ political animosities were kept alive almost solely by the querulous and embittered Dr. Shepherd. Graham's

Factory Education Bill of 1843 aroused a good deal of Dissenting wrath and in Liverpool a rather provocative meeting was held in the Amphitheatre by the McNeile party in support of the measure⁽¹⁹³⁾. The Nonconformists at once retaliated, Shepherd with a series of letters to the Liverpool Albion, complaining of the manner in which McNeile had 'harrassed and humiliated the Protestant Dissenters', David Rowland and others by organizing a rally in opposition to the Bill. Two years later occurred the more complex issue of the Maynooth Grant. Once again Shepherd or Quidnunc as he was known by his latest literary pseudonym felt bitterly outraged, for now the McNeile party was once again as in the 30's angling for the support of the orthodox Dissenters to form a united Protestant front⁽¹⁹⁴⁾. Angrily Shepherd reminded McNeile of the 'contumelious language' of his party used towards the Dissenters only two years previously, and called upon them all to defy the Evangelicals and support the Grant, even to countenance Peel's government lest, he hinted darkly, they were to get something worse!⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. In^{effect} the Dissenters, apart from the Wesleyans who loyally appeared on the McNeile platform, were as unlikely to kowtow to the Anglican Evangelicals as they were to follow Shepherd in approving Maynooth. The lead was taken by Mr. Blackburn who in April 1845 presided over a Non-conformist rally at Great George Street chapel (whose minister however as usual declined to take any part in the affair at all). Here the grant was criticised as an infringement of the principle of religious equality, but the Dissenters disclaimed any intention of joining in a ferocious No Popery crusade, a decision reaffirmed at a meeting at St. George's Hall a few days later⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. This 'independent' line was probably the safest and sanest in the circumstances of the day.

Political tempers were still inflamed when Parliament was dissolved in June 1847, Now Peel's betrayal of the Tories over the Corn Laws threw the local parties into appalling confusion and provided Liverpool with its most entertaining contest since that of 1812. The Tory party was completely distraught, a thing of cabals and cliques which between them selected two most unfortunate parliamentary candidates, Sir Digby Mackworth was a protectionist and Orange extremist pledged to reverse Catholic emancipation, and a man of such alarming ignorance that in one of his addresses he referred to Cromwell's Navigation Laws as having saved England from the Spanish Armada! Another section of the party chose as a second candidate Lord John Manners, the future seventh Duke of Rutland, who came prepared to advocate the full 'Young England' programme of Monarchy, Empire, Aristocracy, Church and Social Reform which, despite his friend's, Bentinck's, warnings, he did nothing to qualify before an

electorate which stood aghast at some of his outrageous sentiments⁽¹⁹⁷⁾. References to the Church as 'our holy mother' were as terrifying to the Protestant freemen as his friendship with Faber and his notorious 'Puseyism', and what was to be made in Liverpool of that early poem which 'clung to him like a burr' during his campaign?

"Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,

But leave us still our old nobility."

Needless to say the Manners and Digby factions were antagonistic to the point of open conflict: only the most unthinking conservative could possibly cast a vote for both. In fact the 'mercantile Tories' i.e. those standing in the Canning-Huskisson tradition, spurned both the 'feudal candidate' and the Protestant hothead, and chose Mr. Edward Cardwell, one of the most brilliant of the younger Peelites, as their champion. As Cardwell's economic liberalism was acceptable to the Whigs, the latter selected only one candidate, Sir Thomas Birch, son of the Whig champion of 1802.

None of these four candidates proved acceptable to the more politically conscious Liverpool Dissenters. On a national level the 1847 election, as has been pointed out⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ saw Dissent, through its own Electoral Committee, expecting nothing from the Tories and thoroughly disillusioned with the Whigs over the educational proposals of 1847 (mild though these were), break its traditional alliance with the latter party, even with its more radical elements, and attempt, with disastrous results, to promote 'voluntaryist' candidates of its own choice. There was no possibility of securing such a representative for Liverpool, despite the promptings of Edward Miall, for the Wesleyans as usual had decided to plump for the Protestant Tory Mackworth and the more reasonable Unitarian Liberals, R.V. Yates, Rathbone, Rawdon, Booth, Bolton and Bright, all appeared on Birch's platform. The aggressive orthodox Dissenters however, led, to everyone's surprise, by Thomas Blackburn, rejected Mackworth who had openly appealed to them⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ and Manners for obvious reasons, Birch because he had abandoned family tradition and become a churchman, declared himself in favour of the education bill and would give no pledge on church rates, and Cardwell because he had actually voted for the education clauses of the 1843 act⁽²⁰⁰⁾. Accordingly, despite the Liverpool Mercury's and Rathbone's strong condemnation of their antics, the 'Committee for Protecting the Civil and Religious Liberty of Dissenters' resolved that they would urge all Nonconformists not to vote in the forthcoming election. Their propaganda of course made no difference at all to the final result, and attracted less and less attention as the campaign wore on, and all interest

focussed on the brilliantly engineered Catholic manoeuvre to defeat Mackworth. When the result was announced and Car^dwell and Birch were declared elected, thus leaving Liverpool for the last time in her history without a single conservative member, Mr. Blackburn in a letter to the press sought falteringly to vindicate the Dissenters' action in abstaining: they had taken their stand against religious bigotry, the establishment principle was now doomed, and voluntaryism bound to triumph⁽²⁰¹⁾. In reality this petty display of sectarian aloofness marked the bankruptcy of Dissent as an effective political force in Liverpool as elsewhere.

Politically Dissent now retreated into the shell from which its well-wishers considered it should never have emerged. In the great controversy over the Papal aggression question in 1850 only the talkative Verner White endeavoured to secure a place on Mr. Neile's evangelical platform, and was promptly snubbed. More characteristic was the reaction of the Rev. James Lister who preached a series of sermons on Daniel's prophecies with special reference to the Church of Rome, or Dr. Raffles who declared that the restoration of the Roman hierarchy should inspire all Protestants to examine themselves thoroughly to determine whether they really were the 'true church', as they claimed. The Dissenting self-confidence of the later 30's had completely evaporated. In the dull electoral history of the 1850's Dissent played no noteworthy role at all. In 1852 Rathbone had great difficulty with the Catholics who objected to Birch's support of Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and persuaded the offending member to stand down in favour of J.C. Ewart, son of the former M.P. McNeile by mammoth efforts secured the return of two Tories on this occasion, but the pre-election manoeuvrings and the rejection of Birch showed quite clearly that the only really effective pressure group on the Whig side was now the Roman Catholics. Allegations of bribery led Rathbone on another of his infuriating Purity crusades in the early months of 1853, but on the two Tories' being unseated for corrupt practices, the town showed its true feelings by returning two more candidates of the same ilk⁽²⁰²⁾. Only in 1855 were the Liberals able to regain a seat, J.C. Ewart defeating Sir S.G. Bonham, a particularly inept Tory. Ewart held his seat in 1857, together with the moderate Tory, T.B. Horsfall, and both sitting members were returned unopposed in 1859. 'Moderation', as Rathbone wrote ^à propos the election of 1857⁽²⁰³⁾ and a spirit of compromise were far better tactics on the part of the Whigs than bitterly contested elections. All the contest of 1857 demonstrated however

was once again the impressive strength of the organised Catholic vote, for the Tories might well have carried both seats but for the successful Catholic plumping against their second candidate, Charles Turner, who had spoken out against the Maynooth Grant.

Municipal politics in the 40's and 50's similarly provided little scope for Nonconformist enterprise. With the overwhelming political supremacy of the Tories, party labels became more and more unreal until between 1845 and 1852 they were dropped altogether as a great struggle raged between the Pikeists and Anti-Pickeists (i.e. supporters of the Rivington reservoir and Bala Lake water scheme respectively). Rathbone, as a leading Pikeist, soon found that municipal elections were fought on this issue alone, and, having made a brief reappearance in the council chamber he lost his Vauxhall seat to a Tory in 1850. When at last serious political contests were resumed in a few wards in 1852, municipal affairs seemed so lifeless that both parties had great difficulty in securing candidates. There was in fact very little now to divide them (George Holt's attempt in 1850 to revive the Corporation Schools question was quickly suppressed by outraged Tories and alarmed Liberals alike), and Hugh Shimmin's illuminating survey of the sixty four councillors made in 1856, wherein he demonstrated that all shared the same commercial and business interests, the Liberals having a slight advantage in respect of wealth and social position⁽²⁰⁴⁾, perhaps explains why this should have been so. After a brief and unsuccessful struggle in the mid 40's on the part of Blackburn, Bright and Thornley to break down Anglican exclusiveness on the Select Vestry, which naturally had repercussions in the council chamber, religious questions shrank completely into the background, so much so that on 27th April 1854 church rates after a quiet and orderly public poll were abolished with the agreement of nearly all parties⁽²⁰⁵⁾. The rate in Liverpool had never played as a significant part in municipal politics as in Leicester and other towns; even so the unostentatious manner of its demise is surprising.

In the absence of strong party feeling it was in fact quite possible during these years for a Liberal to become chairman of a Corporation committee and perhaps the most useful services rendered to the town by individual Nonconformists at this time were those of two such men, George Holt and J.A. Picton. Holt, the representative for West Derby ward and one of the very few survivors of the 1835 Council, the quiet but shrewd and clear-headed chairman of the Water committee, steered the Rivington Pike scheme through successfully and to the great benefit of the town, despite the gross prejudices

and unthinking opposition he encountered⁽²⁰⁶⁾. Picton, Liberal and anti-Pike representative for Lime Street ward and chairman of the Libraries committee, successfully piloted through the Council with the help of William Brown M.P. his brilliantly conceived programme for a town library service which should be a model of its kind, but has earned more gratitude from posterity than from his numerous opponents at the time who complained of the dreadful rate burden he was thrusting upon the town. (The library scheme should probably be seen as complementary to the general enthusiasm of the period for providing rational recreation for the working classes, other examples of which are Caine's Saturday Evening Concerts in the new Lord Nelson St. Concert Hall and the Sailors Home established by Rathbone and others). Picton's success was perhaps more remarkable than Holt's, for as a self-made man and an orthodox Dissenter, he was naturally distrusted far more than a member of the socially acceptable Unitarian clique. A local magistracy was proposed as a reward for his services but was vetoed through the efforts of Mr. Ambrose Lace who referred in scorn to the 'half-educated Methodist radical'⁽²⁰⁷⁾. Gross prejudice still persisted, even into this age of tolerant civic equipoise.

Towards the close of the 50's there were occasional signs in Liverpool that the Liberals were at last beginning to recover some of the militancy they had lost in 1841. In the municipal elections of 1856 for example Mr. J.J. Stitt, a Congregationalist, and J.R. Jeffrey, a Baptist, contested successfully the Everton and Lime Street wards, thus ending a long tradition of party compromise with the Tories. Elated by this small success, and basking in the reflected glory of the young William Rathbone VI's campaign to secure public recognition for the Commissarial Commission which had investigated conditions arising out of the Crimean War and which the government had appeared anxious to suppress⁽²⁰⁸⁾, the Liberals made a stiffer challenge in 1857, and though George Melly was defeated after a bitter contest in Everton ward (his Unitarianism being used as an issue against him), C.T. Bowring was successful against Mr. Harmwood Banner in St. Peter's, which thereafter became a Liberal preserve. Only the absence of great issues could now fail to rouse Liverpool politics from their mid-century torpor.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

THE CITY SCENE (2)

FRUSTRATIONS AND CATASTROPHE

The electoral successes of 1857-60 were followed by the appearance of a pressure group of young Liberals determined to shake off the dull Whiggish complacency and compromise of the local party leadership, and to make a firm bid for municipal control. The 'Cellar Clique' (or Municipal Reform Association, as it was properly called) was however largely the brainchild of one young, self-styled Radical, Mr. George Melly, and can only be understood in the context of his family background and inherited political ideas. Melly, it was generally agreed, was most untypical of the Unitarian Elite which had produced him. Whether owing to his central European ancestry, or to the education he had received at Arnold's Rugby, Melly was at once talkative, brusque and unashamedly class-conscious. He made no attempt to meet his working-class audiences on their own level, preserving an amused, continental detachment which effectively concealed his intense concern for moral values, the one characteristic he fully shared with his coreligionists. Nor, for all his high-principled speechifying, was he prepared for real democratic concessions: the man who admitted airily that 'there is much to be learnt from 3rd class railway conversation'⁽¹⁾, and visited the grouse-moors as often as possible in the company of George Holt or Benson Rathbone, believed firmly that only by self-help would the working man be able to earn himself the moral right to the franchise, that the advantages of state or even municipal interference in social and economic affairs 'are purchased at a price none of us is prepared to pay', and that, as things were, working men had 'neither the time, means or position' to become M.P.s in their own right'⁽²⁾.

Basically Melly's attitudes were very similar to those of the sleepy Anglican Whig hierarchy, the Brocklebanks, Earles, Hornbys and Robertson Gladstone, which he was anxious by his independent efforts to spur into action: his quarrel with them was due more to the impetuosity of youth than to divergent political ideals. Even allowing for Hugh Shimmin's personal animosity towards Melly, the Porcupine's frequent comments on the Cellar Clique's disastrous impact on Liverpool politics are seldom wide of the mark. 'Mellyism', declared the impassioned journal, 'denotes a very small party, convinced that they have a monopoly of intelligence and organising genius, who brusquely and rudely refuse all offers of help from others'. Mellyism implied 'insincerity' and 'approaching the Liverpool working man with the same old patronising airs'. Mellyism was 'snobbishness, upishness, standoffishness, currant-jellyism, and devotion to Liberals of Culture'⁽³⁾.

Undoubtedly however despite his unfortunate election campaign in Preston in 1862 where, as a Unitarian, he was defeated by a curious coalition of Roman Catholics and High Churchmen⁽⁴⁾, Melly was able to energise the younger Liberals into more purposeful activity, and several of his youthful Unitarian friends were successful in winning a number of wards from the Tories; Four were taken in 1861, while S.G. Rathbone and Henry Tate were returned in 1863 and C.J. English in 1865.

By this date unfortunately the influence of the Cellar Clique (which, unjacobinical as it was, sat on raised seats in the council chamber and referred to itself as the 'Mountain') was virtually at an end. It had risen to prominence at a time when social conditions in general, and housing in particular were engaging much attention in Liverpool and another young Unitarian, Mr. James Samuelson, in his 'Popular Science Review' was urging strong doses of municipal reform. From the first the Cellarmen had been determined to entrench themselves on the Health Committee⁽⁵⁾, and had by 1862 largely succeeded in so doing. There was however far more talk about underlying principles than positive action against the owners of slum property such as Mr. Samuel Quilliam, the Free Methodist, whose properties were held up as a disgrace to a civilised community⁽⁶⁾. With great difficulty were the Cellarmen induced to do anything at all; only C.T. Bowring earned himself golden opinions for sweeping away the notorious Whitechapel Rookery and constructing Victoria Street.

Nor was the clique assisted by the fact that two prominent Dissenting councillors (not to mention the Holts and Rathbones who remained indifferent) would only half-heartedly sanction their efforts to revive the declining fortunes of the Party. J.J. Stitt, the wealthy Congregationalist iron merchant, seemed in one respect at least an ideal member of the clique for he was wont to intersperse his speeches with phrases such as 'we of the upper classes'. Oddly enough however, despite his natural hauteur, Stitt was a wily and shrewd politician, far from unpopular with the working-classes and a considerable philanthropist. Though willing to be associated with the Clique on the Health Committee, he always spurned their unwelcome assistance in municipal contests - and retained his seat in consequence. A far different personality was Mr. J.R. Jeffrey, the Baptist founder of Compton House, the great monopolistic trading establishment, whose role in civic affairs when compared with that of Stitt is a fair reflection of the contrasting religious backgrounds of the two men. Jeffrey, one of the survivors of the Financial

Reform Association, was as crude and aggressive as Stitt was cultured and restrained. A self-made egoist (the crowd applauded when eventually Compton House burned down in 1865), illmannered and discourteous to the Whig leaders whom he avowed 'he would bring to their knees', a brash, hard-headed free-trader who poured scorn on the Volunteers of 1859 (Liverpool tolerated many political eccentricities, but drew the line at Cobdenite pacifism), whose reputation for coarse bitterness produced groans every time he rose to speak, was regarded by the Porcupine as scarcely more tolerable than the dilettante Melly. Jeffreyism indeed was singled out as another pernicious influence within the local Whig party: here however the Porcupine was undoubtedly exaggerating, for Jeffry^e's only follower in the Council Chamber was his fellow Baptist, S.B. Jackson, and he can thus scarcely be spoken of as the leader of a distinct group⁽⁷⁾.

Another unfortunate development harmful to the aspirations of the clique was the growing restiveness within the Catholic community vis-à-vis the Liberal Party. This had first been observed in the South Lancashire election of 1861 when a number of Catholics, alarmed over the Liberals' educational proposals, had with the connivance of Bishop Goss voted Tory⁽⁸⁾. A year later the bitter religious antagonisms of Preston transferred themselves to Liverpool: serious Green riots occurred in the town, and the veteran Catholic councillor, Mr. John Yates, was defeated in the Castle Street ward following the defection of Nonconformist and other Liberal voters.

These ill-omened events were followed in 1863 and 64 by a determined Tory attempt to halt the tide of the Liberal revival. Every effort was exerted in 1864 to prevent the election of their particular bête noir, Mr. Jeffrey, as mayor, and in the November elections the Liberals lost a total of six seats. Their impotence was underlined by their feeble showing in the parliamentary election of the following year. Though the energies of many leading Liberals were taken up in promoting Gladstone's candidature in South Lancashire, it was regarded as disgraceful that no local Whig - and the names of Jeffrey, William and S.G. Rathbone (the most likely choice) were all canvassed - could be nominated to stand alongside the sitting Whig member, Mr. J.C. Ewart⁽⁹⁾. Eventually 'Plump for Ewart' was adopted as the Whig rallying cry, but this move did more harm than good, for Ewart was third in the final poll, and two Tories again represented Liverpool. The result was a serious blow^{to} the Liberals and disastrous to the waning fortunes of the Cellar clique. The young Charles Booth, campaigning in the poorer parts of the town, was utterly disillusioned

with the confident moral assumptions of the Toxteth set, and found (a rare experience for a Unitarian) something en^oabling even in the violent religious prejudices of the poor⁽¹⁰⁾. Stitt lost his Council seat for a variety of reasons in 1865, Jeffrey and English both stood down a year later, Tate was defeated in 1866 and Melly himself, though he was returned for Abercrombie ward the same year, found Liverpool audiences 'never caring to listen to me the worst of all flat and slow to respond', and resolved to try his political fortunes in Stoke-on-Trent. In Liverpool there began a notable series of Tory social reforms, answering to the real needs of the town (the first Corporation houses in England were erected here in 1868) and which added still further to the Liberals' discomfiture.

The Cellar Clique was only one aspect of Liverpool Dissent's involvement in politics in the early 1860's. The major issue of the day was undoubtedly the American Civil War, concerning which Liverpool was as strongly pro-Confederate as the rest of Lancashire was pro-Federal. Prominent Liverpool Dissenters assumed broadly three different attitudes to the conflict. A minority, among whom J.R. Jeffrey was not unsurprisingly included, favoured the South for purely commercial reasons: they were roundly condemned by most Liberals. Rathbone adopted a detached, philosophical attitude, expressing himself 'very sorry for both North and South, for much of their misfortune arises from sins inherited from their dour ancestors - they have come in for punishment, and perhaps we shall also'⁽¹¹⁾. This viewpoint was shared by a rising young Congregationalist Liberal, Colonel Robert Trimble whose two pamphlets on the American War tried to be scrupulously fair to both sides, while strongly condemning the South on moral as distinct from constitutional grounds. Rathbone however felt sufficiently committed to correspond with Palmerston in an effort to keep Britain neutral, to declare openly that many of his fellow merchants were 'disgracing themselves' in their indifference to moral principles, and to undertake with Melly the raising of the £100,000 which was Liverpool's designated contribution to the Lancashire Famine Relief Fund⁽¹²⁾.

A third group of Nonconformists made no secret of their revulsion towards the slave-owning South. The Rev. Charles Beard expressed himself forcefully on the point in a series of articles contributed to the Daily News, C.E. Rawlins wrote a strongly-worded attack 'American Disunion' against those of his Liverpool business colleagues of Confederate sympathies, while Alfred Booth who was particularly moved by the slavery issue saw the fortunes of his firm suffer repeated setbacks as a result of the war⁽¹³⁾. (Not all the Liverpool

Liberals who thought like Booth suffered losses however - C.P. Melly indeed and John Patterson both later confessed that they had acquired fortunes through the commercial openings which the war conditions had enabled them to seize). In the short run their pro-Federal attitudes lost the Liberals much popular support in Liverpool, and this was made a particular issue against them in the municipal elections of 1863.

The licensing question of the early 1860's likewise had electoral repercussions, though on a smaller scale. Between 1861 and 1865 the Liverpool Licensing magistrates deliberately adopted the policy of 'free trade in licences' i.e. granting the same to anyone who cared to apply. This was not merely a logical extension of the doctrines of the Manchester School; it was intended as a deliberate blow against those local brewers who were seeking to establish a vicious monopoly⁽¹⁴⁾, and, combined, as its promoters hoped, with a greater firmness in the suppression of drunkenness, would actually have a good moral effect on the town. Among those approving and concerned with implementing the new policy were William Rathbone, J.J. Stitt (the chairman of the licensing bench) and latterly, after a period of opposition, Mr. S.G. Rathbone. The temperance party which felt rather aggrieved against the whole licensing bench for their complicity in banning temperance processions in the town at once sprang into action, and after intensive propaganda a great rally was held under the leadership of John Cropper and Dr. Verner White in 1865. Not for the first time leading Liverpool Nonconformists assailed one another's motives and policies: the principal results of the controversy were however a marked increase in temperance activities in Liverpool in the later 1860's, and the two abortive Liverpool Licensing Bills of 1865 and 1867⁽¹⁵⁾.

In local Liberal circles it was by this date becoming increasingly clear that in William Rathbone VI the party of reform had a future leader of outstanding intellectual capacity, combined with a sharp business sense, a happy fusion of talents which earmarked him as the likeliest candidate for the next parliamentary vacancy in the town. At first Rathbone had been hesitant over the great political question of the day, the extension of the franchise: in 1863 in fact his own franchise proposals, of one third of the Commons elected by universal suffrage, plus an elaborate system of plural voting⁽¹⁶⁾ had been condemned by J.S. Mill to whom he had submitted them, as more likely to antagonise than conciliate the working classes. Throughout 1864 Rathbone kept up his interest in the reform question, though he found Cobden too tired and disillusioned to be interested, and Baines openly hostile⁽¹⁷⁾. By 1866 it was

obvious that he was contemplating the Liverpool candidature, and his brother Samuel wrote to warn the heady young idealist to remember that 'Providence, and not you, is responsible for the existence of evil in the world and that no one man can set it all straight'⁽¹⁸⁾. By this date also the other Rathbone brothers (Philip, William and Samuel were now all on the Council together) had raised the banner of universal suffrage, and were prominent in the work of the local branch of the Reform Union, a fact which delighted their aged father⁽¹⁹⁾. In 1867 the Second Reform Bill made Liverpool a three-member constituency of approximately 60,000 electors, each having two votes, which meant that the minority party could in normal circumstances expect to hold one seat, though the Liberals, elated at the enfranchisement of large numbers of their Catholic and Welsh supporters were aggrieved that Lord Derby had successfully prevented the extension of the constituency boundary further into S.W. Lancashire. At last in March 1868, Gladstone having finally decided not to contest Liverpool himself, and Goldwin Smith having been considered and rejected, the joint Liberal candidature was offered to Rathbone and the Rt. Hon. W.N. Massey, former finance minister for India.

Everything seemed to point towards a substantial Liberal triumph over the two Conservative candidates, S.R. Graves and Lord Sandon, popular, genial and liberally-minded though they both were. Quite apart from the presumed enlargement of the Liberal working-class vote, the Roman Catholics had, after their brief period of flirtation with the Tories, returned to their 'natural allegiance', Rathbone was at the height of his fame as the pioneer of District Nursing and had made himself well-known and well-liked in circles, especially churches, where Tory attitudes usually prevailed. He had been associated with many of the Unitarian-inspired local co-operative ventures of the early '60's, and it was known that he stood well to the left of the town's official Whig leadership, especially over the questions of local government reform and a more equitable system of taxation. He made no secret of his support for Gladstone over Irish disestablishment, and though this would harden the Orangemen against him, it would win the considerable Welsh vote which William Williams, the Welshmen's leader, assured him would be a vital factor in the election. Finally the active support of two friends, the Unitarians-turned-Positivists, Albert Crompton who had just assisted in the formation of the Operative Bricklayers' Society, and his brother Henry who was closely associated with the A.S.C.J., not to mention that of Mr. E.W. Jones, the Liverpool basketmaker and ex-Chartist and of James Samuelson, the Unitarian manufacturer who had imbibed socialist principles, and

could fairly claim credit for the Sanitary Act of 1866 and the Liverpool Operative Trades Hall, erected in 1868,⁽²⁰⁾ should have guaranteed him the votes of large numbers of working men⁽²¹⁾.

The result of the election, with Graves, Sandon and Rathbone returned with 16,766, 16,222 and 15,377 votes respectively, and Massey defeated with 15,017, was therefore a great setback to the hopes of the Liverpool Liberals who had anticipated a spectacular double success. Once again however the endemic weakness of the party had manifested itself; whereas the Conservatives in 1867 had set up a highly organized Workingmen's Association, the Liberals, still under Mellyite influence or perhaps afraid of losing the support of Hugh Hornby, the Earl of Sefton and the Whig element, had failed to create a rival organization. They had also allowed several of their ablest speakers and canvassers to assist Gladstone in South West Lancashire, particularly Colonel Trimble and Alfred Bilson, the cultured solicitor and member of Pembroke Chapel who acted as the Liberal leader's election agent. They had also been tactlessly outspoken over Ireland, had aroused violent Orange feeling and a correspondingly vigorous Anglican-Tory reaction⁽²²⁾.

Rathbone however had been returned, albeit as the minority member, and Liverpool had chosen a local Dissenter as its M.P. for the first time since the brief parliamentary career of William Roscoe. This was of the greatest significance in local Nonconformist circles, for very soon, as Rathbone strengthened his position both in parliament and in the constituency, his Nonconformist friends began to infiltrate into the inner counsels of the local Liberal party till by the mid-70's it was virtually under their control, only the Hornbys, Earles and Brocklebanks among the Whigs, Messrs. D. Cambell, F.A. Clint, S.B. Guion and Edward Russell, editor of the Daily Post, representing the younger, more radical Anglicans, constituting a counterweight to their preponderant influence.

First in importance among these 'new men' was Dr. Charles Beard, the aloof, domineering, cultured, philosophic radical, deploring poverty but countenancing no legislative remedy for any of its manifestations, watching 'with amusement the involutions and convolutions' of the old Liberal Association, inviting Schnadhorst to remodel it on Birmingham lines in 1877, but strongly objecting after the Reform Bill of 1884 to the 'Liberal 900's' disbandment, which democratic gesture 'would give no scope to men of my class and type', earning for himself (for his tongue was so bitter and his ethos so diametrically opposed to theirs) the particular scorn and dislike of the local Tory leaders⁽²³⁾.

Second to Beard was the outrageous P.H. Rathbone, a born Whig and political protégé of George Melly, vexing friends and foes alike with his brilliant and wayward intellect, regarding only the 'Philistines' of both parties as his enemies, exaggeratedly independent of party discipline but fawning before the 'illustrious houses' of Stanley and Sefton⁽²⁴⁾.

Finally, and perhaps the most awkward of this erratic but well-entrenched dissenting junta was John Patterson, dogmatic, combative, abstemious, an Ulster puritan to the marrow but with a curious streak of perfectionism which made him impatient of compromise and expedient, alternately despairing and wondering at the success of the Tory workingmen's clubs, parties and outings compared with the Liberals' failure to arouse their 'moral sense' by the power of reasoned argument. Patterson was anti-Whig, and in Unitarian eyes decidedly 'unclubbable', but not least in his obvious intellectual limitations was the real representative of ~~the~~ orthodox Dissent in the Liberal hierarchy⁽²⁵⁾.

The Nonconformist leadership of the local party in the 70's could thus hardly be accused of lacking character or occasional brilliance: but of any firm grasp of political realities or acquaintance with modern electoral techniques it was distressingly bereft.

The opportunity for self-condolence over the election results of 1868 was short-lived, for very soon afterwards the Liverpool Liberals were plunged into the great debate on educational reform. A local branch of the National Education League was founded in September 1869, four months after the rival Educational Aid Society, established in May, under the auspices of the Bishop of Chester. George Melly, now Liberal M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent, was the former Society's most prominent local supporter, and had already moved in fact for the establishment of free schools, 'to be planted like martello towers' in the poor areas of the larger towns⁽²⁶⁾. Together with others he had also completed a great survey of educational facilities in northern cities, and decisively rejected voluntarism in favour of a universal secular state system. His pamphlet on 'Compulsory Education'⁽¹⁸⁶⁹⁾ revealed that of 309 schools in Liverpool only 53 were in receipt of grants under the payment by results system. Further investigation showed that only 48,000 children were enjoying any education at all, a slightly smaller number never attending a school of any kind. Voluntarism, especially of the Nonconformist variety, had failed dismally, for compared with the 8669 pupils being educated in the 29 Anglican schools and the 5649 in the Catholics' 13, Dissent could boast of only 3302 scholars in its remaining 10 schools⁽²⁷⁾. Charles Booth, another member of

the League, reached similar conclusions, though his estimate of the number of Liverpool children receiving no education was more conservatively given as 25,000. Meanwhile his brother Alfred was chosen as Liverpool representative on the national executive of the League, and, perhaps before most 'secularists', realised that he would have to 'conciliate the parsons', if any success were to be achieved, though he avowed he would 'have his revenge one day' (28).

The attitude of Liverpool's Liberal M.P. to these matters was ambiguous. Rathbone had in company with Melly recently founded the Forster Schools to act as an elementary department of the Liverpool Institute: he could thus hardly begrudge some support for the League. He had however, also joined the Education Aid Society, largely at the behest of J.H. Thom, who urged him to try to secure the retention of religious instruction under any new educational scheme, for 'there is so much good in the Bible and the need is so urgent' (29), and of Charles Beard who, addressing the 1869 Church Congress in Liverpool had avowed that separation from the Established Church was for him 'a pain and an annoyance' (30). When the Forster Act was passed in 1870, the gulf between Melly and Rathbone had widened considerably. The former bitterly attacked the famous seventh clause, and with it the whole power of the Established Church; Rathbone on the contrary found the measure entirely acceptable, though he believed the new School Boards would be superfluous, and that their work could be equally well done by the Town Councils. Undoubtedly Rathbone rather than Melly devined the Liverpool situation aright. The Education League was intensely unpopular in Liverpool, and one of its meetings in the Theatre Royal had ended in a riot. The Unitarian elite enjoyed harmonious relations with the more moderate leaders of the Established Church as well as with the Roman Catholics who heartily approved of the Rathbones' efforts on the Education Aid Society to preserve a choice of schools for parents and help needy pupils with their fees (31). In consequence when in September 1870 Mr. Picton moved in the Town Council for the formation of a School Board in Liverpool, the leaders of all three religious parties, S.G. Rathbone, Mr. C. Bushell and Bishop Goss had already decided that to avoid an expensive contest and to obviate sectarian strife the first Board should consist of four Nonconformists, seven Anglicans (one of these to be a 'workingman') and four Catholics. Messrs. J.J. Stitt, H. Pooley, J. Roberts and C. Wardall accordingly took their seats as the Nonconformist representatives on the Board in mid-November 1870.

Those who expected Liverpool to be able to avoid the denominational bitterness which rent the School Boards of London and other cities were of course

far too sanguine, and as early as the summer of 1871 an ugly situation arose when Mr. J.J. Stitt proposed an end to rate-aid for the Catholic Industrial Schools, and, less reasonably, the forbidding of the use of the Douai version for Catholic children in the Board Schools. It was not often that a Liverpool Dissenter provoked Catholic-Protestant strife, and the aristocratic Stitt must have been rather embarrassed to become overnight an Orangemen's hero. The battle thus commenced was fought vigorously however: public meetings in support of Stitt were addressed by H.S. Brown, Verner White, William Crossfield and George Melly: counter-demonstrations by the Catholics were harangued by Bishop Goss and others. Eventually the Board agreed on a compromise, to continue existing payments, but to sanction no new ones.

With that the agitation might have ended had not Stitt been forced to contest his Town Council seat in Exchange Ward in November of the same year. Stitt took his stand on absolute religious equality and impartiality, and appealed to all denominationalists, including the Catholics, to support him. The latter however were by this time hardened against their Liberal candidate, and acting on the instructions of Bishop Goss, the parishoners of Holy Cross transfeered their votes en bloc to the Tory. Stitt was naturally defeated, and in great anger at once moved on the School Board several sweeping anti-Catholic resolutions which the more moderate members rejected without a debate. Stitt and his supporters were however still in a militant mood when in January 1872 a seat in the School Board fell vacant with the death of an Anglican member. There could now be no thought of compromise: the Orangemen at once selected Dr. Verner White to champion their cause, and oppose 'concurrent endowment'. The Anglicans and Roman Catholics, thrown together in a fortuitous alliance, selected Mr. Lawrence Baily to champion the denominational schools. White announced himself the friend of religious as opposed to denominational education: to his opponents he was a secularist posing as a Protestant hero. Violent meetings were held, and the appearance of a son of Hugh McNeile on Baily's platform was the signal for an outburst of Orange fury. In Everton the Welsh and in Toxteth the Orangemen polled overwhelmingly for White, in Vauxhall and Scotland the Catholics just as solidly for Baily. In the end Dr. White triumphed by 10,499 votes to 9,410⁽³²⁾.

This famous contest had thrown the political parties into total confusion. The Tories had temporarily lost their Orange supporters, the Libeals the all-important Catholic vote, while two Dissenters, Stitt and White, found themselves the champions of the Protestant workingmen. But it was an unprecedented

situation and unlikely to last. Within two years White had overreached himself and been driven out of town, while the School Board after these exciting events resumed the placid course it had from the start intended to follow. Compromise and conciliation were to be the order of the day, and in 1876 S.G. Rathbone, the very embodiment of this spirit, succeeded Mr. Christopher Bushell as chairman, which office he was to hold for eighteen years. Considering the strength of the denominational schools in Liverpool, and the consequently restricted sphere in which the Board operated, its record is impressive. Much of its success, the Pupil Teachers College, the Day Industrial Schools, the development of science teaching, the happy formation in 1874 of a complementary body, the Liverpool Council of Education with its invaluable Technical Instruction Committee, and the successful anticipation of nearly all the provisions of the Balfour Act of 1902 owe not a little to the Rathbone influence⁽³³⁾. The complete absence of sectarian strife, and the working-out of an acceptable religious instruction syllabus by S.G. Rathbone and the Rev. Pulliblack, a Wesleyan, are a similar tribute to the quiet but firm control they exercised over educational matters. Even the triennial School Board elections were fought in a surprisingly gentlemanly fashion, the electorate (not more than 20% of whom usually bothered to vote) wisely choosing the best educationalists and refraining from upsetting the denominational balance⁽³⁴⁾.

The educational controversy of the later '60's had given Dissent a political impetus which it had not, in Liverpool at least, experienced since the 1830's, and a local branch of the Liberation Society, led by Stitt and the veteran Kelly was active alongside the Education League soon after the return of the Gladstone government in 1868. By late 1870 in fact the Liberationists had become so noisy that a rival Anglican meeting held at Knotty Ash denounced them as 'libellous, malignant conspirators'⁽³⁵⁾. Throughout 1871 and 72 the Society held regular meetings, one of which, addressed by Mr. George Howell during its short-lived dalliance with the working-class radical movement⁽³⁶⁾ was broken up in confusion. In the spring of 1873 a series of great rallies was planned, despite the fact that the Liverpool Society was much smaller than that in Manchester, having no local office, and very few prominent supporters, outside the rather limited circle of the Congregational, Baptist and Free Methodist connections. Kelly's speeches had been widely circulated as Liberation Society tracts, and these were referred to in a lecture by the Rev. Marmaduke Miller in Hope Hall on 24th March entitled 'Church Property, Whose Is It?' The Rev. H. Carpenter of Emmanuel Church replied to Miller in a pamphlet, claiming that

just as his father had put to rout Mr. Enoch Mellor ten years previously⁽³⁷⁾, so the duty now devolved upon the son to expel this same malignant dissenter who had dared to appear on Miller's platform, from Liverpool once again. Carpenter denounced the Liberation Society in vigorous terms and compared its members to the Paris Communards. A lecture in reply by the Rev. Colin Brewster of Brownlow Hill Congregational Church, delivered during another rally at Hope Hall on 8th May was however such a sorry performance, assailing, as it did, the Established Church from a bewildering variety of sources, ranging from the laws of Aethelwulf to the writings of Henry George, that it was not apparantly adjudged worthy of a reply. Only in 1881 did the local Liberationists once again engage public attention when a denunciation of their Society as a 'restless and zealous body' by Bishop Ryle in a visitation charge led to an exchange of letters in the Liverpool Mercury, subsequently reprinted as 'The Bishop of Liverpool and the Liberation Society' in December of the same year. This latest manifestation of Liverpool Political Dissent represented by the Liberationists had not (as had happened in 1841) been shouted down so much as ignored as a minor nuisance scarcely worthy of serious attention. It lurked in the background however of one of the most significant of Liverpool by-elections, that fought in the February of 1873.

This contest was caused by the sudden death of the sitting Tory member, Mr. S.R. Graves, a very popular and skilful politician who had played an important role in urging Disraeli to take his famous 'leap in the dark' in 1867, had brought all his Liverpool experience to bear in support of the Torrens Housing Act of 1868, had taken a lead in reducing postal charges, and had latterly earned golden opinions in the Alabama claim negotiations. Undoubtedly his Tory radicalism had attracted a good number of Liberal voters who would now presumably defect from the new Tory candidate, the wily, smooth-tongued but reactionary Mr. John Torr, a retired Liverpool merchant. Other circumstances would also favour the Liberals; the Ballot Act of 1872 would end for ever the grossly unfair advantages the Tories enjoyed and enable the Liberal workingman to vote against his employer or landlord, and the shopkeeper against his customers; two newly founded Liberal working-class organizations, Colonel Trimble's Richmond Hall Association, and James Samuelson's Working Men's Club, had clearly undermined some of the Tories' electoral strength, while the Orangemen were both disunited among themselves, Verner White having quarrelled with the already notorious William Simpson of the Landing Stage Cafe, and had in addition forced the embarrassed Torr to give the most forthright promises in

the direction of a vigorous and unbending Protestantism. The only question was now the choice of a suitable Liberal candidate, and the Daily Post advised the selection of a truly national figure of great forensic ability, otherwise the nominee would have to be a local man, a Nonconformist and teetotaler (a striking indication of the contemporary strength of this faction within the local party) and 'this is not our line' (38).

Unfortunately a threat by a section of the Catholic Liberals to nominate Dr. Commins as a third, Home Rule, candidate threw the local party into confusion, and the Post's worst fears were realised when, after Robertson Gladstone and FitzJames Stephens had both refused the candidature, Mr. W.S. Caine was officially nominated. Caine was the son of blunt old Nathaniel Caine, the self-made Liverpool business man who had accumulated a fortune out of haematite iron. He had made his public debut in the debating room under Myrtle Street chapel, and his father-in-law, Hugh Stowell Brown, was the first Nonconformist parson to speak out openly in support of the thirty-year old Baptist, temperance advocate and heir to his father's programme of providing 'rational recreation' for the working classes of the town. On January 27th Caine made the first political speech of his campaign - to the Liverpool Permissive Bill Association. The worst fears of the more moderate Liberals had been realised: here was that most impossible of Liverpool candidates, the temperance 'crotcheteer' (39). Now, with the powerful backing of such men as H.S. Brown, Lockhart and more extreme teetotalers, there was no chance of Caine's political meetings being anything more than extended temperance rallies, a circumstance which, as the Tories gleefully noted, caused acute embarrassment to William Rathbone who had naturally (though with considerable misgivings) to speak on Caine's behalf.

Having found one chink in the Liberals' armour, the Tories proceeded to discover several more. Caine could not deny that he was a member of the Liberation Society, or that most of his meetings were held in Nonconformist Halls (40), and in an unguarded moment was forced to admit that in education, he supposed, he considered himself a 'secularist' (41). On social questions he appeared very much the second generation iron-master, and advanced no further than 'helping the working classes to help themselves'. He became completely entangled over the Liberals' Criminal Law Amendment Act which Torr was able simply to denounce as class legislation in its vilest form. In a fervour of Tory-Anglican enthusiasm (and it was said that ultimately Gladstone's Upas tree overshadowed this election more than any other issue) Caine was to the general dismay of his party beaten by 16,790 to Torr's 18,702. Two crumbs of consolation

alone remained for the Liberals: the fact that the polls had closed at 4 o'clock might have debarred many Liberal workingmen from voting, while in a series of by-elections which showed a marked revulsion against the government this one compared with the contest of 1868 had registered a slight percentage swing the other way⁽⁴²⁾.

On the other hand several uncomfortable conclusions were inescapable: the temperance issue had certainly not improved, perhaps even fatally weakened the Liberals' chances of success, the Protestant masses would continue to vote Tory, ballot or no ballot, the 10,000-odd Irish Catholic voters, frightened by the 'secularist' cry, had abstained in large numbers, and the Welsh vote (estimated at 8,000) had, as in 1868, proved completely unreliable, despite the forthright assurances of its self-appointed spokesmen to the contrary. It was now that the Liberals for the first time began to speak of Liverpool as Tory by some inexplicable kind of natural law⁽⁴³⁾.

The by-election of 1873 had been a tiresome and rather perplexing distraction in the political career of William Rathbone. By now he was a respected and well-known parliamentarian. Despite his Quaker-like eccentricities (and all throughout his periods in London he was writing home to his family personal memoranda full of doubts and self-questionings as to whether he was being corrupted by wealth or by London life, whether he was cowardly in not speaking more boldly on unpopular issues etc.⁽⁴⁴⁾), he had emerged clearly as one of the strongest apologists for the Forster Act and for the 'desirableness of religious teaching'⁽⁴⁵⁾. Equally he had made a foe of the temperance M.P.'s and of the local temperance party and had spoken out against Lawson's Permissive Bill. This was a particularly unfortunate breach, for the Liverpool temperance men, mostly young Presbyterians, such as Guthrie, Lundie, Smith, Balfour and Matheson, were moderate 'local optionists' rather than bigoted prohibitionists, and on other questions tended to agree with him wholeheartedly (Balfour for example, impressed by his educational arguments, had opened at his own expense a local pupil teachers college, especially intended to serve the denominational schools)⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Rathbone had also acquired the reputation of being one of the most approachable of Liberal M.P.'s so far as the Trade Union leaders were concerned. He had befriended George Howell, and though he had supported the act of 1871, he had voted against the clauses under which the subsequent notorious prosecutions had taken place. Finally, on certain topics, bankruptcy law for example,

he had become an acknowledged expert, while the questions of local government, taxation and poor law reform (wherein he had been greatly impressed by the German Elberfeld system) he kept constantly before the House with the backing of a small knot of M.P.'s, including Goschen and Stansfield⁽⁴⁷⁾. He could thus throughout 1873 face the impending dissolution (which Gladstone was to spring with alarming suddenness) with equanimity, especially as the curious electoral arrangements of 1867 made his re-election, at least as minority member, beyond reasonable doubt.

The election of February 1874 was memorable less for the campaign itself than for the astonishing amount of political manoeuvring before the short contest actually began. From the start Sandon and Torr, the Tory Candidates, adopted a strongly Disraelian line, with a heavy emphasis on their staunch Protestantism and the 'Irish folly' of the Gladstone government. The Liberals took longer to select their candidates, and longer still to adopt a generally acceptable programme. As late as January 25th in view of the prevailing anti-Liberal atmosphere, many responsible leaders were for running Rathbone alone and not bothering with the expensive luxury of a second candidate, but the next day the Association by a narrow vote adopted both Rathbone and Caine. At once an alarming situation developed. How would the various factions within the party react to the double candidature? The temperance clique interviewed both men, and though some of the diehards, with the memory of Rathbone's support of freetrade in licences still in mind, declared they would plump for Caine, at length decided not to undermine Liberal unity by adopting so destructive a line of conduct⁽⁴⁸⁾. The Liberal Workingmen's Association likewise despatched a deputation but were not completely satisfied over the candidates' attitudes either to the Trade Unions or to workmen's compensation. The Liverpool Trades Council had from the start expressed an interest in the contest, had considered nominating two candidates of its own, one Tory and one Liberal, offered to run Samuelson who reluctantly declined as he had already been adopted at Birkenhead, and eventually decided to throw their weight behind James Simpson who, without much solid backing or influence, had determined to enter the contest on a curious platform of social reform, militant Protestantism, temperance, and Irish Home Rule! (It was considered that Simpson as a leading Orangeman would damage the Tory cause far more than the Liberals - Caine in fact urged all Tory workingmen to plump for Simpson as strongly as the Tories urged that only Rathbone would be acceptable to them as minority member). There then appeared a formidable Roman Catholic deputation to interview the two candidates on clause 25 of the Forster Education Act.

Rathbone could give fairly satisfactory assurances but the delegates complained that Caine received them 'with great discourtesy'. The long-simmering tension within the Catholic party at once erupted to the surface: the older, more responsible element pledging half-hearted support for the Liberals, the younger militants seeking a Home Rule candidate of their own, and making unsuccessful approaches to both Samuelson and Lord Robert Montagu.

Caine could scarcely conceal his disgust at such a manoeuvre, and bitterly attacked both Fr. Nugent and the Catholic Times which had officially advocated the adoption of a Catholic candidate. A distinct Home Rule party had now emerged, and, failing at the last minute to secure a candidate, ordered all Irish Catholics to abstain. (About 40% in fact stayed away from the polls)⁽⁴⁹⁾. To complicate this bewildering situation still further a Nonconformist deputation had arrived at the same time as the Catholics to demand an exactly opposite assurance on the notorious clause 25. The Revs. Pearson and Scorey and Messrs. Stitt, Snape, Mounsey, Golding and Caerns (four Baptists, two Congregationalists and a Free Methodist) were not completely convinced by the unhappy candidates' compromise declaration and the Tory press not unexpectedly had great fun in contrasting their subtly-worded replies to the two religious parties whose activities had hamstrung their campaign from the very start. After a strong plea for unity from Stitt, Crossfield, Trimble and Lamport, the Dissenters finally agreed to support both Liberals, though two militants, the Revs. Pearson and William Binns (Unitarian, Birkenhead), announced they both felt compelled to abstain⁽⁵⁰⁾. The strain of this nerve-racking contest quickly began to tell on both Caine and Rathbone and both were more than relieved when on February 6th the poll gave Sandon and Torr 20,206 and 19,763 votes respectively, Simpson a lowly 2,435, Rathbone 16,706 and Caine 15,801. Calculations showed that 600 Liberals (mainly Roman Catholics) had plumped for Rathbone, and 250 (mainly teetotallers) for Caine⁽⁵¹⁾. The gap between the voting strengths of the two parties had widened, and unless harmony could be restored in the Catholic ranks or a breach effected in the massive Tory-working class alliance, the outlook for the Liberals could be expected to worsen rather than improve.

In municipal politics however the later 70's saw a marked revival of Liberal activity. The decade had begun badly, with disastrous defeats in 1871 and 72, whilst following the general election of 1874 Liberal fortunes sank so low that no contest at all was held in the November of that year. Then followed the calamitous Liberal/Home Rule schism, and a series of embittered contests

which in 1876 and the few years following allowed the Tories to capture some most unlikely wards. It was more a gesture of despair than of lively expectation that the remodelling of the old Association in the shape of the Liberal 900 was carried out in 1872, the year after R.D. Holt had succeeded W.S. Caine as leader of the Liverpool Liberals. Holt, who held his difficult office with a few months break in 1885 till his retirement from active politics in 1891 was the only possible choice for the Liberals in the difficult circumstances of the mid-70's. Unobtrusive, earnest and always smiling, his rare gifts of a conciliatory spirit and a disarming humour blended with the customary 'shrinking modesty' of the Holt clan enabled him to calm the turbulent spirits of tee-totallers and free traders in licences, Whigs and Irish, Liberationists and comprehensive state church men and impose a façade of unity where a firmer leader would only have wrecked the party altogether⁽⁵²⁾. The Holt ethos came to be as firmly stamped on the local party as William Rathbone faithfully conveyed the Liverpool Unitarians' singular image to the nation at large.

The Liberal recovery of the later 70's was not however due entirely to its new leadership. Despite its internecine feuds the Catholic community was growing fast, and its vote becoming more and more decisive in the central wards. The Holts themselves with their extensive properties in Edgehill and West Derby virtually ensured a strong Liberal challenge in those areas. Nonconformists too, though nowhere sufficiently numerous for their votes to be decisive, exercised a powerful influence in the West Derby ward wherein Green Lane, Norwood and Richmond Chapels were all situated⁽⁵³⁾. Furthermore these years saw a renewed outburst of temperance activity which seems, oddly enough, in a rather changed climate of opinion to have reacted in the Liberals' favour. Institutions multiplied: the Liverpool Vigilance Committee (1875), the British Workman Public House Company (1875), the Temperance Electoral Association (1876), the Liverpool Popular Control and Sunday Closing Association (1876) whose particular object was to block up the back entrances of public houses and which in 1883 produced the notorious 'Drink Map of Liverpool'.

Presbyterians like Balfour, Williamson and Matheson taught the working classes that their concern for temperance did not exhaust their social sympathies and that they would pursue their struggle against abuses on merchant ships as keenly as against the drink interest⁽⁵⁴⁾. William Simpson threw his weight behind this popularization of the temperance cause, and actually secured election to the Council as a workingman and temperance candidate in 1879.

Meanwhile John Roberts M.P. developed large areas of East Toxteth on the express condition that no public house should be erected in the area; once again a slight accession of strength to the Liberal party seemed to follow⁽⁵⁵⁾. In the Council Samuel Smith fulminated against the evil effects of prevailing conditions on the health of children, and, in his attacks on the free licenses granted between 1862 and 65 which had by now hardened into vested rights, learned to despise the tepid laissez-faire Liberalism which had permitted so grave a scandal. In 1881, with the support of many Tories, Smith was able to carry a resolution petitioning parliament for local option⁽⁵⁶⁾. At the same time as Smith broke down the entrenched power of the drink interest on the Council, Lundie, Balfour, W.H. Jackson and William Crossfield who had for some time been collecting evidence on drinking abuses in the town in the disguise of labourers performed a similar work on the Licensing Bench, gradually wearing down the resistance of jeering solicitors, hooting barmen, unsympathetic magistrates and the Recorder of Liverpool who acted as standing Counsel for the publicans' party by the obvious reasonableness of their case⁽⁵⁷⁾.

This conflation of favourable circumstances enabled the Liberals to register considerable successes in 1877 and 1878, and a notable triumph in 1879 when eight gains were recorded. The Party seemed poised for victory, and on the point of securing a majority of councillors to unseat the overwhelmingly Tory aldermanic bench. But in 1880 their goal eluded them, through their failure to gain just one extra seat which would have put them ahead of the Tories, Matheson and George Holt being both narrowly and surprisingly beaten. A year later it was the turn of another Nonconformist aspirant, Mr. Crossfield, who had relied on 'moral persuasion' rather than canvassing, to frustrate their hopes yet again. Now with another outbreak of Home Rule militancy, their confidence began to falter once more: in any case the suspicious and discreditable circumstances surrounding the parliamentary elections of 1880 fatally damaged the Liberals' prospects, even in the eyes of their keenest supporters.

Precisely when the Liberal 900 determined that William Rathbone should not stand again as their candidate is by no means clear. As early as 1878 Rathbone himself in deference to the open hostility of both the Irish nationalists (for he would make no concessions on Home Rule) and the temperance party was contemplating giving up his seat⁽⁵⁸⁾, and during 1879 the animosity of these two factions appears to have intensified. Since even the militant Nonconformists

were now despairing of him because of his marked liking for the Established Church, his fate was virtually decided. Early in January 1880 Lord Ramsay, the Liberal son and heir of the Tory Earl of Dalhousie, was chosen as candidate for the town. The nomination did not preclude Rathbone's standing as a second Liberal, but the implication was clear. Ramsay had everything to offer which Rathbone seemed to lack. He was a naval officer and a peer, a combination which Liverpool found irresistible. He favoured popular control and so pleased the temperance faction: he was persuaded by R.D. Holt to accommodate the Irish over Home Rule and was the first Liberal candidate to give a specific pledge on this issue. He favoured an extension of the franchise, and the 'eventual' disestablishment of the Church. All in all this fairly advanced radical could be relied upon to conciliate most sections of the party⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Within a few days of his adoption he had the opportunity to test the feelings of the constituency for on January 16th John Torr, the popular, bluff, sociable Tory member whose bonhomie with all sections of Liverpool society was the Liberals' envy, died, and the seat was declared vacant. The spirited contest which followed between Ramsay and the young Tory attorney, Edward Whitley, was remarkable chiefly for the emergence of the Home Rule issue as the clear dividing line in Liverpool politics, but other features are no less significant: the unhappy platform appearances of Rathbone in support of the young Lord (who relied implicitly on the sitting member's guidance) and his rough handling at the hands of the Irish and temperance men, the revival of Nonconformist passions when it was recalled that Whitley at an Orange rally had spoken of Dissenters and Catholics as 'our common enemy', the Anglican sermons preached on Whitley's behalf and the appearance of the noted Wesleyan, Dr. Dallinger, on his platform. Eventually after a hectic campaign the revulsion of the town's Protestant masses against the demands of Dr. Commins and his Home Rulers wore down whatever advantages Ramsay possessed and he was defeated by 2221 votes.

A few weeks later general election rumours were in the air, and Rathbone was left in no doubt that Liverpool was his no longer. He departed with regret: 'I did fit Liverpool, and it will not be easy to find another place I should fit' he was to lament later⁽⁶⁰⁾. A doubtful seat was found for him in South West Lancashire, and the official Liberal version of this move was that had he contested Liverpool he would have attracted the votes of so many Liberal plumpers and liberally-minded Tories that the second Liberal candidate would have come a bad fourth!⁽⁶¹⁾. Such specious reasoning rightly carried no weight with the

Tories: the dropping of Rathbone simply meant that Liverpool had been 'sold to the Irish'⁽⁶²⁾. The Liberal 900 having committed one folly proceeded with incredible naivety to inform the Conservatives secretly that they did not intend to contest the town at all, but would allow the two Conservatives and Lord Ramsay unopposed returns! The embittered Liberal rank-and-file who soon discovered what was afoot declared themselves 'ashamed of their party', and loudly accused its miserly 'moneyed men' of being unwilling to finance a contested election. When it was later learnt that Rathbone who had been left to campaign in S.W. Lancashire almost single-handed had been routed at the poll, the party seemed to have reached its nadir. When next to the unbounded amusement of the Tories the Liberal 'swells' of the Reform Club even went so far as to crown their egregious proceedings with a dinner to celebrate the 'return' of Lord Ramsay, not a few Liberal workers avowed that a party whose leadership had behaved in so scandalous a fashion was unworthy to be taken seriously at all⁽⁶³⁾.

Within three months the Liverpool electorate was to demonstrate its concurrence with this despairing opinion, for the sudden death of the Earl of Dalhousie in July meant that Lord Ramsay was translated to the House of Lords, and a Liverpool seat was vacant once again.

At once the Tories selected an Irish peer, Lord Claud Hamilton, as their candidate, while the Liberals hesitated whether to invite Rathbone or Samuel Plimsoll to fight on their behalf. Rathbone however not unnaturally declined the offer: Lord Derby advised him that the contest would be practically hopeless⁽⁶⁴⁾, while his brother Samuel reported that though Rathbone might attract 2600-odd middle class voters who disliked Plimsoll (as did Rathbone himself), the 'sailor's friend' would doubtless pick up a far larger number of working-class votes which would normally have gone to the Tory⁽⁶⁵⁾. Plimsoll however was to find little joy in the contest. The Liberal 900, having invited him, left him to fend entirely for himself; some of them in fact purposely declined even to vote. The Home Rulers now in a particularly truculent mood avowed they would bring about Plimsoll's defeat, even though the Orangeism of 'Lord Claud' was of a most aggressive variety. The brief contest terminated with Hamilton receiving 21019 votes to his opponent's 19118⁽⁶⁶⁾.

The electoral fiascos of 1880 and the municipal frustrations of that and the following year cast a gloom over the local Liberal party which not even the formation by a group of youthful enthusiasts of the Junior Reform Club served to dispel. The election of the radical S.B. Guion as president of the Liberal

900 in June angered the Whig faction; a promised visit by several prominent Liberals to the town resulting in nothing more than a dinner party at Arthur Earle's infuriated the radicals; the municipal elections in October saw a good deal of Irish Nationalist disaffection and a net Tory gain of one seat⁽⁶⁷⁾. When late in November 1882 the Tory Lord Sandon succeeded his father in the House of Lords, the party wearily resigned itself once again to a seemingly hopeless struggle.

No good candidate from outside the town being available, an approach was made to the youthful Samuel Smith who, despite his sanctimoniousness and narrow views, was now a well-known figure on account of his philanthropic work in connection with the university, the Y.M.C.A., various children's charities and, most notably, the Coliseum venture, and had succeeded in winning Castle Street ward in the recent municipal elections. Meanwhile the Tories had selected Arthur Forwood, the advocate of democratic Toryism or 'municipal socialism', as his advanced programme was called, and a most astute political organizer. After only a few days' campaigning Smith began to attract widespread attention. Not only was he discovered to be a brilliant reasoner, which compensated for his ungainly appearance and thin, piping voice; his radical ideas, his repudiation of those 'who thought Cobden and Bright had spoken the last words of wisdom'⁽⁶⁸⁾, his passionate pleadings for the children of the submerged tenth, his advocacy of the taxation of urban land values, above all his scornful references to the local workhouse as an institution which with its dinners, gala days and public exhibitions of well-fed children 'brings a certain éclat to the small tradesmen charged with its oversight', all contributed to a sudden awareness that at last the Liberals seemed to have found a candidate whose severely practical moral earnestness would be certain to impress the Liverpool voters⁽⁶⁹⁾.

How impressive it must have appeared was shown in the voting of December 14th when to the amazed delight of his followers Smith was returned with 18,198 votes to Forwood's 17,899. All kinds of explanations were offered for this astonishing result. Some middle-class Tories had certainly voted for Smith either out of respect for his philanthropic record or because they considered that 'the minority seat was equitably Liberal property'⁽⁷⁰⁾. Others thought the explanation lay in the unpopularity of Forwood with certain classes of the community, the cabmen, dockers, shopkeepers and labourers especially, for despite his advanced views Forwood was not a good employer. Still more thought that the Irish party's holding aloof from Smith had actually won him a

good many Tory votes, or that the Tories' raising the bogey of grandmotherly temperance legislation were he to be returned had rebounded on their own heads. Forwood himself, explaining his defeat in the Contemporary Review, averred that his own democratic Toryism was still too novel for general acceptance, though it would very soon have to prevail were the party to survive⁽⁷¹⁾. The fact remained that Liverpool had now elected her third Nonconformist M.P. (albeit an orthodox instead of an 'old' Presbyterian) and Smith's parliamentary career during the short time he represented the town, his sponsoring of private members bills for compulsory evening school for child-workers of 13-15, or his humane pleas for the foster-parent idea as opposed to the 'barrack schools' which his Liverpool experience had taught him to ab^hor, attracted the support of many like-minded radical M.P.s and won him the friendship of W.T. Stead and James Stansfield⁽⁷²⁾.

At home too his unexpected victory inspired the Liverpool Liberals to pass on with a vigorous campaign against Tory financial corruption which reached its climax in 1885 when the majority party was forced to appoint a special commission to investigate the mysteries of the Corporate Estate. Liberals in their new-found enthusiasm seemed scarcely to notice that, as he had predicted, Forwood's municipal housing policy was winning the support of more and more workers who reacted in alarm against the activities of the largely Liberal Land and Houseowners Association, or that each successive year the growing strength of the Irish Nationalist party was weakening their own organization in certain wards to skeletal proportions.

Unconcernedly Liverpool Liberalism staggered on to its crisis year, 1885, and to the electoral débâcle from which it was never again to recover. In the early months of the year William Oulton whose radicalism was matched by considerable organizing ability tried both to inspire the party to a fresh appraisal of its potentiality under the newly proposed constituency changes and to ensure that when Liverpool ceased to be a single three-member seat and became nine separate constituencies each one would contain a satisfactory Liberal executive and a band of dedicated workers. His efforts had however met with little success even when the constituency boundaries were finally settled, the old Liverpool seat disappeared, and the Kirkdale, Walton, Everton, West Derby, Scotland, Exchange, Abercromby and East and West Toxteth constituencies were formally mapped out. The Whigs, and not least Dr. Beard, saw the passing of the Liberal 900 with deep regret: few seemed disposed to adapt themselves to the more demanding circumstances of the new electoral arrangements.

During October the prospective candidates were adopted one by one, and a galaxy of talent hopefully sought the parliamentary honours which fate had so long denied to the local Liberal party. Unfortunately in the most likely constituency, Scotland, the Liberal organization had vanished to nothing, and with reluctance it was decided to allow the Irish Nationalists led by the redoubtable T.P. O'Connor a free hand, a move bitterly regretted when in November the Irish vote plumped decisively against the Liberals. (H.W. Meade-King had not helped in this delicately-balanced situation by becoming chairman of the national committee to defray Parnell's divorce expenses). Exchange too was predominantly Catholic, and here the Liberals nominated an Irishman W.H. O'Shea, an action which caused a certain amount of discontent, and led to the nomination of an independent Liberal, T.E. Stephens. Another Liberal certainty appeared to be Abercromby, 'Liverpool's Bloomsbury', as it was known, a conflux of business, artizan, and intellectual interests, the most lively and progressive of all the new divisions. Samuel Smith was naturally adopted as prospective member for the city's elite constituency. Everton of course chose a Welsh Nonconformist, Mr. F. Davies, who set himself the hitherto unachieved task of rallying his fellow countrymen to the Liberal cause. In Kirkdale Samuelson stood as a Liberal, though loudly professing his 'Labour' interest⁽⁷³⁾; a fellow-Unitarian, the learned and philosophical business man, Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, stood for West Derby. The brilliant Augustine Birrell was adopted for Walton, where his father had been particularly well-known and popular. East Toxteth chose Mr. J.C. Bigham, an Anglican lawyer, to oppose an unknown Tory, the Baron de Worms, while West Toxteth, the Orange stronghold, which was the only really impossible seat from a Liberal point of view, selected a nonentity, Mr. T. Sutherest.

Though the November municipal elections gave the Tories a few successes, including the defeat of Mr. John Stevenson, Liberal representative of Peter's Ward for 23 years, the Liberals felt nonetheless sufficiently assured of at least two parliamentary successes, with the possibility of four others to exert every pressure in the short November election campaign. Two issues alone seemed to concern the electorate - Fair Trade, about which the Liberals were decidedly uncomfortable (Mr. David McIver, the most outspoken of the Tory protectionists was standing for Birkenhead), and the perennial question of the Church In Danger. The Nonconformist candidates, Samuelson, Birrell, Davies, Guthrie, Smith and Sutherest, the cream of intellectual Dissent, Chamberlainites to a man and advanced social reformers, had neither the demagogic gifts nor

even the will to resist the Protestant campaign mounted with belligerence by Bishop Ryle and Lord Claud Hamilton, Tory candidate for West Derby. The more they expounded their radical programme, the more they were deafened by the drum ecclesiastic, 'beaten with a vigour unparaelled in our recent history'⁽⁷⁴⁾, but which alone seemed to summon the attention of the Protestant masses. As a full-scale attack was launched in the Courier against the Chamberlainities as the enemies of denominational schools and of the Church, many a prominent Liberal was forced to rue the day he had subscribed to the fund to endow the Liverpool bishopric; Even so, the results announced on 'Black Wednesday', November 25th 1885, were worse than even the gloomiest of Liberal prophets of doom had ever feared. Though O'Connor was swept to power in Scotland, in every other constituency the Liberals had failed, O'Shea by 55 votes, Bigham by 810, Smith by 807, Samuelson by 1410, Birrell by 992, Davies by 2472, Guthrie by 1145 and Sutherest by 1983, all but the first considerable Tory majorities. News was received on the same day that W.S. Caine and William Crossfield had also failed to secure election to the new parliament.

Even now however, Liberal fortunes had not yet reached their nadir, for in the early months of 1886 their ranks were decimated by the Unionist revolt. In some ways it was with relief that local Liberals and their literary organ, the Liverpool Review, welcomed the departure of the Whig 'moneybags', the grand old Anglican families such as the Brocklebanks, Earles and Hornbys⁽⁷⁵⁾. The desertion of so many erstwhile supporters from the ranks of Nonconformity could hardly be reviewed in the same light: the formidable Scots and Irish Presbyterian block⁽⁷⁶⁾, the radical Oulton, the leader of the Unionist schism when as early as March Liverpool became the first town in England to witness its emergence as a distinct political grouping, Lockhart with his large Baptist following, and among the Unitarians, W.A. and H. Jevons, Alfred and George Holt, Holbrook Gaskell and Henry Tate. Though R.D. Holt and, after some hesitation, the Booths, and about half of the other Unitarian political leaders stood firmly behind Gladstone, as did the more democratic Free Methodist, Baptist and Congregational connections, this loss of talent, and particularly of radical talent, was irretrievable.

Once the first impact of the Unionist secession was over, R.D. Holt, and the remaining Liberal leaders, among whom the Unitarians, it seems, now wielded an unchallengable preeminence, could take stock of their party's enfeebled condition. In the Exchange constituency, the commercial heart of Liverpool, Unionism had triumphed completely, in most others it had decimated the newly-

created divisional executives; only in Abercromby and Walton did a sizeable body of Liberal workers remain.

In May 1886 with the Irish now definitely swinging back to the Liberals, and a visit from Lord Dalhousie reviving the party's flagging fortunes to some degree, a determined effort was made to recover lost ground, particularly by William Crossfield in East Toxteth. Efforts were also made to secure new candidates from outside the town, several of those who fought in 1885 having withdrawn or secured nomination elsewhere, Birrell for Widnes, Samuelson for East Renfrew and Smith for Flintshire. Everton and the two Toxteths were allowed for the time being to go by default to the Tories, no effort was made against 'Tay Pay' in Scotland where Arthur Earle was standing with Tory support as a Liberal Unionist. Sir Thomas Brassey, a Lord of the Admiralty, was nominated for Abercromby, Ralph Neville, a barrister from Esher for Kirkdale, the Hon. C.H. Branby for Walton, and Sergeant Hemphill for West Derby. Only one local candidate was adopted, Mr. David Duncan of Duncan, Fox and Co., American merchants, a Presbyterian and advanced radical in the tradition of Smith and his brother-in-law, Steven Williamson.

In the Home Rule election of July 1886, wherein more animosity was generated between the orthodox and dissident Liberals than between the latter and their Tory opponents, the 'Gladstonians', even with Irish support, fared very badly, with huge Tory majorities in every constituency save Scotland where O'Connor had a spectacular success, and Exchange, where the Catholic vote was, as expected, sufficiently strong to give Duncan a narrow majority of 210 over his Conservative opponent, Lawrence Baily⁽⁷⁷⁾. The Liberals could perhaps congratulate themselves on having achieved with a minimum of organization what had been beyond their powers in the more harmonious circumstances of the previous year.

(2) Nemesis (1886-1914)

This solitary success brought small comfort to the local party leaders, nor were its internal stresses any less marked after than before Mr. Duncan's return to Parliament. In the latter half of 1886 indeed the Liverpool Liberals seem to have reached their nadir. A squalid action involving the party leaders was fought in the Nisi Prius Court on 7th August, while at the same time in the Council Chamber the old guard, Picton, P.H. Rathbone and Yates expressed themselves so averse to party politics that they undertook to hold whatever offices the Tories chose to bestow on them. The whole concept of a regular 'opposition' to the ruling party was thus imperilled, and Rathbone was in fact appointed vice-

chairman of the Finance Committee which most radicals regarded as the hallmark of Tory extravagance and corruption.

In the October municipal elections Liberal strength, now that the leadership had virtually capitulated, was reduced to 16, and the Liverpool Review, surveying the wreckage of the local party, discovered only the Anglican Murpratt and the Presbyterian Paull, who had not 'bowed the knee to Baal' (78). In vain R.D. Holt strove to hold together his protoplasymic organization: so seriously had the fissures in the opposition ranks now developed that the Irish Nationalists seemed to be more enthusiastic about unseating the English Catholic Yates in Vauxhall ward than in defeating the Protestant Tories, while in December it was only by a margin of seven votes (3217 to 3210) that, following the sudden death of David Duncan, Sir Ralph Neville, an Anglican lawyer, held the Exchange constituency against the powerful challenge of the Rt. Hon. J.C. Goschen (79).

Holt was however determined that his policy of courtesy, conciliation and compromise would eventually succeed where harsher measures or firmer leadership were certain to fail, and by 1889 the fruits of his genial urbanity were becoming apparent. In the Reform Club, of which he became chairman in 1888, he convinced a number of Unionists of the justice of the Gladstonians' case, while in 1890, an astonishing reconciliation with the Irish Nationalists was achieved, Mr. J.R. Grant, the Jewish furniture dealer who represented their interest in St. Anne's ward, standing successfully as a Liberal and ousting the Tory in the November elections of that year (80). A really determined effort had been made in the previous year's municipal contests and several prominent Nonconformists had been returned to the Liberal benches, John Japp, W.H. Watts and Nathaniel Topp all scoring notable victories.

The causes of this sudden revival are not hard to seek. In East Toxteth Joseph P. Brunner had in 1886 begun a campaign to expose what he called the Tories' maladministration of the Corporation's affairs, and though de Bels Adam, the Presbyterian who became Tory Mayor in 1891, rose valiantly to the defence of his party, it was in this constituency that most progress was achieved. Brunner's efforts were however as nothing compared to the Purity Crusade which R.A. Armstrong launched on the town in 1889.

In some respects the Crusade was a revival of the temperance agitation which had become prominent again following the foundation of the Liverpool Direct Veto League in 1885: but under Armstrong and the Social Gospellers who were soon to be associated on the editorial board of the Liverpool Pulpit, it

acquired a breadth and intensity which the more narrowly circumscribed campaigns of earlier decades had entirely lacked. The public conscience was aroused as never before when on 26th June 1889 a group of citizens led by Dr. Lundie appeared before the Licensing Bench, decried the culpability of the chief constable who since his appointment in 1885 had allowed the moral condition of the town to degenerate to an appalling degree, and enquired why in 1888 15,000 persons had been convicted for drunkenness and yet only one publican been arraigned for abusing the Licensing Law. Sir James Picton, the then chairman of the Bench, could do little else than advise the petitioners to form a Vigilance Committee to root out and particularise the abuses whose general notoriety they had already exposed. This incident was followed by Armstrong's defiant sermon 'Municipal Morality' delivered in Hope Street Church and a pamphlet 'The Deadly Shame of Liverpool' (1890).

The moral righteousness of these determined crusaders had completely burst the chrysalis of mere temperance polemic: the Watch Committee and the Tory majority on the Council were denounced for their upholding an accursed alliance of the liquor traffic, financial corruption and the aforesaid unmentionable evil of street prostitution: several of the more guilty abettors were mentioned by name, and the moral degeneracy of the submerged tenth of squalid Liverpool arraigned in its ghastly infamy. Never was the power of the non-conformist conscience in the town stronger than in 1891 when the case of Sharp v. Wakefield in the House of Lords led to a complete reshaping of the Licensing Bench under the chairmanship of the impartial Sir Thomas Hughes⁽⁸¹⁾, Armstrong's pamphlet was used by the Liberals as election propaganda in the November contests, and another crop of radical successes ensued.

A slight check to the triumphant progress of the purity crusaders and their political allies was administered by the General Election of July 1892. Kirkdale, Walton, Everton and West Derby, though all were contested, were by now considered by the Liberals as beyond their reach, and O'Connor was once again given a straight fight in the Scotland division. In Exchange however, Neville would be defending his seat against J.C. Bigham, the Liberal Unionist who had only a short time ago been one of the most extreme radicals in the Liberal Party, in Abercromby W.B. Bowring would uphold the entire Newcastle programme, including Home Rule, Welsh Disestablishment and the Direct Veto, against the sitting Tory member, W.F. Lawrence; in East Toxteth Edward Paull, ^a and keen purity crusader, would oppose the Baron de Worms, and in West Toxteth E.J. Griffiths would pit his Welsh disestablishment fervour (many of his election meetings were in fact

conducted in his native tongue) against the formidable R.P. Houston. Though the Pamellite split had been healed a few weeks before the campaign began, the bitterness persisted in most constituencies, and in West Toxteth Councillor Taggart, representing the Nationalist and Labour interest, proved a great embarrassment to the Liberal challenger. Nor did the fierce temperance harangues of Aked and the Rev. F.A. Russell, both of whom lacked the breadth of Armstrong's social concern but who persuaded all the Liberal candidates to commit themselves to the Direct Veto and Sunday Closing, prove of particular help during the campaign. In the upshot Paull, Bowring and Griffiths were all heavily defeated, though there was some consolation in that Neville's majority was increased to 66, while William Rathbone, J.A. Picton, Thomas Snape, Stephen Williamson, Alfred Bilson and W.S. Caine, all Liberals, Nonconformists and well-known Liverpool businessmen, were returned for other English and Scotch constituencies⁽⁸²⁾.

Armstrong was certainly not to be deflected from his purpose, which was now to secure a resounding Liberal success at the next municipal contest, by the disappointing results of the General Election. The current of civic feeling was running strongly in support of the reform party, which needed to win only a few extra votes to secure control of the Council which had eluded them ever since 1841. For the purpose of the November 1892 elections Armstrong produced a new pamphlet 'Two Years Ago and Now', a panegyric on what had been achieved morality-wise since the Purity Crusade began, and an earnest plea for a new Liverpool, 'of the purer and sweeter life, the cleaner homes, the happier children, the more thrifty wives, the more manly men', to be realised, it seems, by the overthrow of the Tory oligarchy⁽⁸³⁾. The Tories, perhaps sensing that they were in need of a spell in opposition, and divining correctly that their opponents' tenure of office would be of short duration, fought feebly and without conviction. The Liberals needed to win but one seat to secure victory; three in fact were taken. Not a few pulpiteers like Aked himself spoke eloquently of a wilderness wandering longer even than that of the Israelites but which had at last led an intrepid host to its Pisgah-like sight of the promised land⁽⁸⁴⁾.

During the three years that the Liberals held power in Liverpool an impressive programme of municipal reform was undertaken. The great financial crisis they had inherited was resolved by the passing of the Liverpool Corporation Act of 1893, the gas, electricity and water monopolies were all broken, and these undertakings municipalised. The Watch Committee and the Police were

thoroughly reformed, and a healthier atmosphere introduced into the Council Chamber by sharing out the aldermanic seats proportionately with the Conservatives⁽⁸⁵⁾.

These successes deserve recognition, for otherwise the story of Liverpool's second Reform Corporation reads as painfully as that of its forerunner in the 1830's. The first mayor chosen by the Liberals in succession to J. de Bels Adam was inevitably Robert D. Holt, to whose efforts their success had been mainly due. Unfortunately Holt 'who never could take polemics seriously' was not the ideal leader for a party in power as he had been in opposition: on his own admission his chief delight as an art connoisseur was to serve on the Library Committee: the cut-and-thrust of political debate bored and pained him. Even while he was concentrating on what was to be his most distinguished achievement, the conferment of city status upon the municipality and his own translation to the Lord Mayoralty in August 1893, the surge of events had begun to move strongly in the Liberals' disfavour.

As early as the aldermanic elections of December 1892 an ugly quarrel among the Liberals, Trades Council and Nationalists had cost the party two seats. This discomfiture was a minor affair however compared with the by-election debacle of January 1893. The Liberal victory had been in a sense a triumph for the Nonconformist conscience of the city, and it was perhaps inevitable that the most prominent of Mr. Aked's lay preachers should have been chosen to contest the West Derby division on the death of its sitting Tory member, W.H. Cross. Unfortunately Mr. Shilton Collin had not only cut a figure of fun in the national press by his absurd role in Mrs. Ormiston Chant's campaign against the London Music Halls⁽⁸⁷⁾, he was the most fanatical and intolerant of the temperance-purity crusaders whose election speeches (many of them delivered from the pulpit of Pembroke chapel) were little more than denunciations of the immoral habits of various classes of working men. Not all Aked's eloquence on behalf of the 'representative of the Church of Christ' against 'the forces of anarchy and disorder, of the blood-stained ^{traffic in drink, an outrageous description of the most reserved} and gentlemanly of Tories, Mr. W.H. Long) availed to save Collin from a crushing electoral defeat, for Long was returned by a huge majority of 1357. Very few Liberal workers apart from the Aked clique had turned out to canvass for Collin, and large numbers of Liberal voters had deliberately abstained. Bitter recriminations followed⁽⁸⁸⁾.

In August 1893 another explosive situation developed, this time over P.H. Rathbone who on the first meeting of the Council of Greater Liverpool was bitterly criticised by Nationalists and radicals as an anachronism, the last

representative of an effete and spineless Whiggery. Stung by these taunts Rathbone delivered a speech on the Ideal City significant less for its eloquent apostrophe on the vision which had attracted the finest minds of the Unitarian élite since the early years of the century than for the disparaging note on which it ended, a contrast between the situation in Roscoe's day and that ninety years later: 'we have Conservatives who conserve only their own interests, Liberals who are liberal only of abuse, Radicals who go to the root of nothing, and Irish Nationalists who come here to live' (89). As Dr. Beard had realised a few years previously there would be less and less scope for men of culture and refinement amid the crass political jerrymandering of the new democratic Liverpool.

Having weathered a number of storms such as this, R.D. Holt was succeeded as Lord Mayor by William Bowring in November 1893. Typically Unitarian in that the qualities of old-world courtliness, geniality, temperate language and a bluff good humour characterized his mayoralty as they had his leadership of the Liberal party in the Council Chamber since 1892, Bowring still retained very much of his early radical enthusiasm for though most of his efforts were to be directed towards reducing the size and rate of interest on the city debt and to the relief of famine in Western Ireland, his presidency of the Liverpool Anti-Sweating League led to a useful campaign against the more obnoxious types of female and child labour within the city. His year of office was marked by much essential and rewarding labour and few of the unfortunate episodes such as had troubled his predecessor (90).

The choice of the third Liberal Lord Mayor in November 1894 was likely to prove difficult. William Crossfield, it appears, was approached, but declined owing to his parliamentary duties, while P.H. Rathbone's suggestion of the Tory Earl of Derby was derisively rejected by the ruling party. With some misgivings the office was entrusted to Alderman W.H. Watts.

As the Unitarian clique was often upbraided for deliberately monopolising political power, the Mayoralty of Watts appears an awful lesson as to what was likely to happen were their stronghold ever to be relaxed in favour of less erudite and cultured politicians. Watts, the son of a Baptist minister and a former colleague of Jeffrey in the Compton House venture, had entered the Council in 1889, and since the Liberal victory of 1892 had displayed outstanding talents in the reduction of Corporation expenditure. Unfortunately this tight-fisted businessman had drunk rather too deeply of the gospel of Samuel Smiles to achieve much success in the politics of a city such as Liverpool. Having

climbed from poverty to a suburban mansion he had developed, as events were to show, as much contempt for the feckless and improvident working classes as he had retained an old-fashioned Cobdenite abhorrence for the imperialist Tories⁽⁹¹⁾.

It was thus most unfortunate that his mayoralty happened to coincide with a period of grave economic distress and acute unemployment, particularly at the docks. Armstrong, by now the self-appointed 'watchdog over Liverpool's morals', and a far more sympathetic and discerning public figure than C.F. Aked, at once demanded through the columns of the Daily Post a local commission on the unemployment problem which, when it was appointed in December 1893, advocated a whole series of relief measures, including heavier doses of municipalization, and the setting up of farm colonies⁽⁹²⁾. To the amazement of the Liverpool Pulpit group however, the only approval for the Commission's report came from a group of progressive Tories, Forwood, Burgess, Hughes and Willink, whose genuine enthusiasm for social reform was matched by the cynicism of the Liberals, and the incredible obtuseness of the Lord Mayor, who, when asked what to do with the poor, replied in an unguarded moment: 'let them go to the devil'. Aked's furious denunciations of his fellow Baptist excelled any of his previous pyrotechnics, and the pages of the Liverpool Pulpit for 1895 are filled with shocked amazement that the forces of moral progress seemed somehow to have deserted the Liberals, and found a refuge with the very men whom the Social Gospellers had for years held up to public execration and contempt. More thoughtful observers realised however that they were witnessing but the logical fulfilment of Forwood's democratic Toryism of the early '80's⁽⁹³⁾.

At the height of these municipal embarrassments the Liberals were in July 1895 confronted with another General Election. This time there seemed even less prospect than ever of success. Aked had long been campaigning from the pulpit and in the press against Lord Roseberry, and, according to the Liverpool Review (now rapidly becoming the mouthpiece of Liberal Imperialist sentiment) his 'pack of crafty, domineering, selfish shouters, anti-gamblers, anti-enjoyment mongers' had played some part in bringing about the downfall of the Liberal government⁽⁹⁴⁾. The party had the greatest difficulty in securing suitable candidates, and eventually three seats, Walton, Everton and Abercromby, were left uncontested, the Liberals hoping naively that their opponents might in view of this make a less vigorous effort against them in the Exchange division. The Conservatives had on this occasion nothing at all to fear, though there had been some resentment that Forwood, the architect of democratic Toryism and

de Worms, a prince of political organizers, had not received places in Salisbury's caretaker government⁽⁹⁵⁾. The well-known sympathies of Forwood and Willox for the Trades Unions and their friendliness to the workingmen added to the solid support of the Orange Lodges would doubtless carry the day. Only W.B. Bowring's candidature in Exchange could thus be taken seriously and desperate efforts were made to retain the seat which Neville had vacated through ill-health against a strong Liberal-Unionist challenge from J.C. Bigham.

Bowring's radicalism was however small compensation for the stigma of temperance fanaticism which now seemed to infect the whole party (and this despite William Rathbone's drawing applause at one of the election meetings by referring to the temperance clique as 'disagreeable fads'), and availed them nothing against the suspicion that the Liberals intended to undermine the sacred principle of denominational education. On this issue there was a marked swing among Roman Catholic voters to the Tories, which oddly enough even pulled down T.P. O'Connor's majority over a Tory Orangeman in the Scotland division!

As the results came out, there was revealed a succession of crushing Liberal defeats and when it was learnt that the party had lost its only Liverpool seat, and Bowring had been beaten by 254 votes in the Exchange division, Aked, calling in at the Reform Club, was selected as a scapegoat by angry Liberal workers who hissed him and abused his 'sour system of government' which they surmised had led to this catastrophe⁽⁹⁶⁾. When it was also learnt that Caine, Snape, Crossfield, Williamson and Bilson had all lost their seats in other parts of the country, the Liberals' discomfiture seemed to be complete. Even so, however, it was not the Tories' rejoicing which caused so much chagrin, or was in the long run so portentous, as the brief statement issued by the local branch of the I.L.P. that, in view of the Liberals' miserable record in municipal affairs, Labour considered itself fully 'avenged' by the party's overwhelming defeat at the polls⁽⁹⁷⁾.

There seemed little point in continuing a hopeless struggle. The Liberals in fact sealed their own fate by agreeing in 1895 to an extension of the city boundary (the first for sixty years) to take in Walton, Wavertree and the rest of Toxteth Park, all recognized Tory strongholds. (The party had always opposed such an extension in the 80's, knowing that it would betoken their electoral downfall. Now however in view of their campaign for financial economy and increasing the rateable value of the city it would have been patently dishonest to postpone the inevitable any longer.) In November 1895 the party was swept from office, and returned once again to a customary, and perhaps welcome, obscurity.

The last five years of the nineteenth century were from the Liberals' point of view devoid of interest. In Liverpool politics it was Alderman Salvidge's Tammany-like Working Men's Conservative Association, founded in 1892 to promote more extensive municipal housing, improved public health, and a militant Protestantism which stole the limelight. Public attention became focussed once again on the all-absorbing and perennial topic of religious controversy, though this time Orange sentiment was to be directed less against the Roman Catholics than against the handful of advanced Anglican ritualists. It was to counter their activities that Austin Taylor promoted his Church Discipline Bill in 1899, the same year as Salvidge displayed his omnipotence within the Tory organization by forcing Walter Long who had never been vigorous in his political Protestantism to stand down in West Derby at the next election⁽⁹⁸⁾. Within the Liberal ranks these years saw the emergence of a new leader in the person of Edward Evans, the druggist of Spital Hall, an Anglican whose conciliatory disposition and broad tastes readily commended him to Unitarians such as Bowring and Holt. The latter indeed continued to keep a paternal eye on party discipline and the former remained till 1912 its leader in the Council Chamber, but it was Evans who as President of the Liberal Federal Council now wielded most effective power and earned for himself the soubriquet 'the Schnadhorst of Liverpool'. (Oddly enough he had succeeded Schnadhorst as chairman of the National Liberal Federation in 1894)⁽⁹⁹⁾.

Only one by-election disturbed the somnolent Liberals during these years, that in the Exchange division in October 1897. With a slight swing against the Salisbury government in other parts of the country, high hopes were entertained of regaining this important commercial seat, and Richard Rea, a young Presbyterian merchant, was chosen to stand against the powerful Liberal-Unionist challenger, Mr. Charles McArthur. Rea conducted a spirited campaign, concentrating entirely on national issues, and though his cause was not helped by a number of Conservative successes in the November municipal elections or by a blundering campaign of Aked's to prevent Mr. John Houlding becoming the next Tory Lord Mayor on account of his drink connections⁽¹⁰⁰⁾, the solid support of Liberals, Labour and Irish Nationalists seemed to the very end to presage success. Rea was however beaten by 2711 votes to 2657, and his defeat spread despondency through the Liberal ranks: even 'smiling Bob' Holt for once lost his customary cheerfulness, and was heard to remark on the moribund condition of his party. Neither he nor any of his fellow Liberals could have foreseen however that within three years an appalling internal crisis would be threatening it with complete dissolution.

From the very commencement of the Boer War it was obvious that the Liverpool Liberals would fall apart angrily over the rights and wrongs of the conflict, and that pro-Boer sentiment would affect the local party in at least four distinct ways.

Firstly the Liberal Dissenters (and here the parallel with the Jacobins of the 1790's is surprisingly close) would stand almost alone in their opposition to the war. A.H. Bright, Bowring, Samuelson, R. Robinson, the Rev. Armstrong, R. Meade-King, Sir J. Brunner, A. Booth, E.H. Holt and William Rathbone made no secret of where their sympathies lay⁽¹⁰¹⁾. There could however be little expectation that apart from the inevitable Aked, any other religious leaders within the city would applaud their sentiments. In Roman Catholic churches prayers were regularly offered for the success of British arms, and Monseigneur Nugent, the 'apostle of the slums', was one of the foremost anti-Boers⁽¹⁰²⁾. Anglican Evangelical and Orange opinion was militantly jingoist, and St. Silas Toxteth became the venue of the Liverpool Patriotic Society, a body formed to counter the treasonable activities of the Pro-Boers⁽¹⁰³⁾. Nonconformity in general took a similar line, Ian McLaren vying with John Thomas of Myrtle Street in protestations of uncompromising loyalty⁽¹⁰⁴⁾, whilst to 300 letters sent out by the Pro-Boers to local Nonconformist ministers late in 1899, favourable replies were received from two only⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

Secondly Pro-Boerism would certainly aggravate the division of opinion which had long been developing locally over the whole question of the Liberal leadership. The party was clearly split into three warring sections; the Liberal Imperialists who favoured Haldane and Grey and whose views were now echoed by the Liverpool Review which saw Pro-Boerism as a continuation of the meddlesome Social Purity crusade, the moderate supporters of Campbell-Bannerman, among whom the unfortunate Edward Evans and R.D. Holt⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ who strove to hold together the various factions within the party are to be included, and lastly the Pro-Boers. These internal bickerings came to a head in August 1901 when Edward Evans resigned from all his offices in despair, though by December of that year a façade of unity had been restored, largely by the action of A.H. Bright who temporarily abandoned his fellow Pro-Boers and pledged support for the Leadership of Roseberry⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

Thirdly the pro-Boer movement was throughout its turbulent course conspicuously a crusade of an ageing group of idealists against the youthful Imperialism of the rest of the party. The local press often indicated that the crisis in Liverpool Liberalism really resolved itself into a conflict between the 600-

strong Senior and 800-strong Junior Reform Clubs. It was the former to which the majority of the Pro-Boers belonged, and it was the latter whose periodical, 'The Clubman', denounced the parent society 'where pro-Boer sentiment has found a solid lodgement', 'where preside the finiking Mr. Robert Holt, and the blundering Mr. William Bowring', and 'where the pop-bottle of mawkish sentiment is assiduously sucked by an unhealthily constituted section' ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. Even the younger generation of Unitarians were obviously deserting their parents over this issue: H.R. Rathbone volunteered for service in the war, but was rejected on medical grounds, and Mark Philip Rathbone actually attained the rank of major in South Africa. Greggs and Holts were also among those who joined the colours in the patriotic frenzy of 1900 ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. There was even a move, frustrated by the Conservative leadership in order to avoid inflicting unnecessary grief on the aged and ailing William Rathbone, to adopt one of the young Imperialists of that family as Unionist candidate for the West Derby division ⁽¹¹⁰⁾.

Finally it is conspicuous that the popular jingoism of the war years appeared to the older Gladstonian Liberals to presage the total eclipse of the moral ideals they entertained for city and country. Goldwin Smith wrote to an approving William Rathbone of a 'conscious trampling of moral principle underfoot, as sort of satiety of civilization and a passion for what the candidate for the American presidency calls the strenuous life' ⁽¹¹¹⁾. The process of disillusionment is even more marked in the case of Armstrong, who now, perhaps because he appeared so cold and aloof (in contrast to the verbal pugilist Akered who spoiled for a fight and whom his enemies respected and maybe secretly admired) suddenly found himself the best hated man in Liverpool. The 'Unitarian curio', 'the pious Christian moralist' of the Courier's unsparing invective ⁽¹¹²⁾ may have spoken publicly of the current military ardour as 'summer madness' ⁽¹¹³⁾ - secretly he was left depressed and embittered by the blatant jingoism and materialism of the century's ending. Within a very brief space of time the city's esteemed moral crusader had become the favourite whipping-boy of its war-mad populace.

The Pro-Boer agitation began its public course with the formation of a Liverpool branch of the South Africa Conciliation Committee on January 19th, 1900 at a public meeting presided over by Sir John Brunner. The unusually high social standing of this company drew letters of indignant lamentation from several correspondents to the local newspapers: 'these persons are neither Irish Nationalists nor low class politicians, but highly respected gentlemen with unfortunately perverted judgement' 'read one of them' ⁽¹¹⁴⁾.

The early meetings of the Committee were accompanied by a good deal of noise and shouting, but as admission was by ticket only violence was fortunately absent⁽¹¹⁵⁾. Yet as reverse followed reverse in South Africa and volunteerist enthusiasm in Liverpool grew, public temper became more ugly, and there were signs that the uneasy tolerance the Pro-Boers had enjoyed would soon come to an end. In these circumstances the incident of 22rd March 1900 becomes more comprehensible.

For several weeks the local press and in particular the Liverpool Review had been campaigning vigorously for 'my country right or wrong', for a cause 'morally indefensible but practically indispensable', and against the Pro-Boer faction. 'Mr. Aked makes a great deal of noise. He tells us that we are murderers. But his voice is the voice of Charles the Baptist, crying in the wilderness',⁽¹¹⁶⁾. About February 20th it was rumoured that the Pro-Boers were to hold another rally at St. George's Hall. 'Let them organize a meeting', mocked the Review, 'the riot that followed would be worth seeing. Wherefore, we dare them to it'. These taunts continued until it became known that the South Africa Committee would hold not a public meeting, but a private one in the house of the Rev. Armstrong. This was not advertised and was being kept as secret as possible when Captain Nott-Bower, the chief constable, announced that were the meeting to be held he would afford no police protection and would not be responsible for the consequences. In a letter to the press Armstrong denounced this action as at best a serious abdication of official responsibility, at worst a calculated encouragement to popular rowdyism and bigotry. Whatever the interpretation the Review was delighted. At this time of crisis 'human nature is shown to be greater than the power of free speech. Thank you, Captain Nott-Bower',⁽¹¹⁷⁾.

Later in 1900 the situation eased somewhat, and the Conciliationists managed to hold a number of all-ticket meetings, but in the Khaki Election of September the Pro-Boer stigma had so alarmed and confounded the local Liberal party that only two seats were contested, Kirkdale where a Dubliner, Mr. R.R. Cherry, was overwhelmingly beaten by David McIver, and the erstwhile marginal Exchange, where Mr. F.W. Verney came up from London duly to be defeated by Charles McArthur by 2811 votes to 1514. In Walton, Everton, West Derby, Abercromby and the Toxteths Conservatives were returned unopposed. Cherry and Verney, neither of whom was a Pro-Boer, both had great difficulty with rowdy election meetings, especially with the charges of cowardice hurled at the local Pro-Boers, none of whom, it was suggested, had dared to stand himself, whilst in

the municipal elections which followed a month later H.R. Rathbone despite his well-known approval of the war came near to losing his seat for no other reason than that other members of his family were known to oppose it⁽¹¹⁸⁾.

By this time in fact passions were running so high that any further Pro-Boer activity was out of the question. Not till a year later did Aked rashly determine to renew the controversy. On September 30th 1901 at Pembroke Chapel he denounced the war as 'a crime against humanity, a capitalist war, worked up to by a kept press, initiated by treachery and lying'⁽¹¹⁹⁾. Two months later having studied Miss Emily Hobhouse's reports on conditions in South Africa the doctor let it be known that on January 5th 1902 in place of an advertised address on Athanasius, he would preach on 'Our Cowardly War'. The chapel was packed to capacity, while outside stood a crowd of 2000 unable to gain admittance. Aked was in sparkling form. 'Great Britain', his harangue ended, 'cannot win her battles without resorting to the most despicable cowardice of the most loathsome cur on earth - the act of striking at a brave man's heart through his wife's honour and his child's life'⁽¹²⁰⁾. After the service some fighting, in which Aked himself was involved, took place outside the chapel and the Pembroke manse in Edge Lane was damaged by an enraged mob.

Aked had certainly anticipated that the affair might end thus, but even he could have had no idea that his claim for damages, approved by the Watch Committee, where his Nonconformist friends still had a majority, would be contemptuously rejected by the City Council after a week of heated debate on 12th February 1902. It was an unprecedented and scarcely lawful decision. In the short run it marked the final rout of the Liverpool Pro-Boers: to those with the gift of prophecy it could well have seemed that militant Nonconformity had played its final and most humiliating performance on the stage of civic politics.

To the local organizers of the Passive Resistance campaign so gloomy an outcome was far from inevitable. Despite a painful illness Aked was once again prominent in this crusade which began as soon as the clamour over the Boer War had subsided, though he was powerfully aided by Mr. Herbert Watts M.A., the president of the Liverpool School Board Defence Society. Quite apart from the general grievance over the Balfour Education Act, the Nonconformists would appear to have had a valid case over the composition of the new Education Committee whereon sat only three of their number, Mr. Oulton, Mr. H.R. Rathbone and Philip Holt, a co-opted member, all of whom had well-known sympathies for the Established Church, and none of whom had shown himself particularly favourable to Dissenting claims.

The first rally was held in Princes Avenue Methodist Church on October 7th 1902, with the Revs. J.H. Taylor (P.M.) and John Thomas (Baptist) as the chief speakers. This was followed by a larger gathering at Great George Street Church on 13th October where a strong lay platform consisting of W.P. Hartley, William Crosfield, J.H. Simpson and R.G. Hough argued the Resisters' case. The veteran Dr. Guinness Rogers denounced the bill in a speech at the Exchange Hotel on October 16th, and a spate of meetings followed in Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist and Free Methodist church halls. Perhaps the most notable of these was that at Norwood Congregational Church on October 20th when the curate of the Evangelical St. Chrystotom's denounced the bill as enabling traitorous 'ritualist' clergy particularly in country districts to bring up Protestant children on Romish principles⁽¹²¹⁾.

It was quite clear in fact that Evangelical Anglicans, Orangemen, the Laymen's League, and Salvidge's caucus were all as concerned about the Balfour Act as were the Nonconformists, and the fascinating possibility of a revival of the situation in 1870 when both kinds of Evangelical Protestants had exhibited a united political front was being openly discussed when the East Toxteth parliamentary seat fell vacant on the resignation of A.F. Warr, the sitting Conservative member. That the alliance did not materialise and act decisively in the Liberals' favour was due to the amazingly confused circumstances of the by-election which followed, which observers deemed the most singular in Liverpool's history.

As soon as the two candidates had been adopted late in October 1902, H.R. Rathbone for the Liberals and the progressive but fanatically evangelical Austin Taylor for the Conservatives, it was realised to the former's delight that there had arisen a considerable revolt of middle-class Tories, especially Anglicans of high and broad church sympathies and temperance workers, against the whole organized power of working-class political Protestantism, represented by the 'beer and bigotry' régime of Salvidge and Thomas Hughes, 'boss' of the licensing bench, and recently reinforced by the arrival in the town of the street preachers, John Kensit and George Wise. The 'respectable' Tories of St. Ann's parish church announced their decision to support Rathbone, while two Conservative clubs prepared to work for the Liberal's return. Taylor meanwhile tried both to reconcile the Tory rebels, estimated at as many as 1500⁽¹²²⁾ and to reassure his Orange supporters by promising 'amendments' to the Education Bill to protect the rights of conscience, particularly in rural areas. (Many eager Protestants were not reassured however, and demanded that Taylor reject the bill outright).

Meanwhile Rathbone, having made promises to the Passive Resisters and the temperance men, was in serious difficulties with the Catholic vote. His own plea for 'equal rights for all denominations' failed to satisfy many Catholics who declared they would abstain, while the brutal street murder of John Kensit on November 2nd enflamed religious passion to an alarming degree. The municipal elections held the same day gave the Liberals several gains, including two in East Toxteth and seemed to show that the tide was flowing strongly in Rathbone's direction, though the Passive Resisters were rather put out to discover that several of the Liberals elected had pledged support for the Balfour Act⁽¹²³⁾. Wisely perhaps both candidates strove to avoid the educational issue as much as possible, and concentrate on imperial and Irish affairs. Unguarded references by Rathbone to the Welsh Church enabled Taylor in the last stages of the campaign to raise the bogey of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England which won the Protestant masses completely to his cause, and silenced at least for the moment the popular clamour over 'Rome on the rates'. It was a brilliant ruse, and despite the internal quarrels within the Conservative party, it enabled Taylor to prevail over his Liberal opponent by a majority of 377 votes.

The Passive Resisters, mainly because the educational issues in the by-election had become so inextricably confused (one of Taylor's eve-of-poll tactics had actually been to appeal to the Nonconformists as likely to get a fairer deal from him than from the 'beautifully idealistic' Rathbone) had not played the prominent political role which had perhaps been expected of them, and during the following year their influence waned still further, especially as Aked, their ailing leader, now spent long periods abroad, convalescing at Davos in Switzerland.

From 1903-5 in fact Liverpool politics were dominated by the revolt of the Protestant party, led now by George Wise, against the official Conservative leadership, their emergence as a separate political force, and their remarkable successes in the Kirkdale, Garston and St. Domingo wards against Tory, Nationalist and Liberal opponents. In comparison with the sound and fury of the Wise crusade the Passive Resisters could raise no more than a feeble pipe. In the West Derby by-election of May 1903 when the youthful Richard D. Holt stood for the Liberals against the strong Tory challenger, Mr. W.W. Rutherford, Mr. Herbert Watts attempted to rally Nonconformist opposition to the Education Bill, bringing in the Rev. Hirst Howell¹¹ to speak on Holt's platform, and even making an appeal to the working-class vote by demanding Trades Council

representation on the new Education Committee. Rutherford's democratic Conservatism, and his expertise on the ever-popular themes of imperialism and lawlessness in the Established Church easily prevailed over the inexperience of Mr. Holt who cut a sorry figure in this election, refusing to pledge himself firmly on the educational question or to declare with which of the various sections of the Liberal party he aligned himself. He was beaten by 5455 votes to 3251.

Oddly enough this election, far from bringing any comfort to the Passive Resisters, merely demonstrated that organized Nonconformity was far from united in their support. Not only did Rutherford, himself a Presbyterian, confess that though there were features of the bill he found obnoxious, he felt that Passive Resistance was even more so, but Alderman Bowring from Holt's platform appealed to all Nonconformists to cease opposing the bill and try to make it work, a plea taken up by the Revs. Stanley Rogers and W.J. Adams, the respected spokesmen of the Congregational and Baptist connections respectively⁽¹²⁴⁾. By the end of the year Passive Resistance was being maintained largely by Welsh Dissenters, Primitive Methodists and a handful of Baptists who comprised most of the sixty individuals fined before the Dale St. Magistrates on December 16th.

In the only other by-election fought before 1906, that in Everton in February 1905, Passive Resistance hardly appeared as an issue at all, most attention being given to George Wise's decision to support the Liberal, Mr. W.H. Aggs, against the Conservative J.S. Harmwood-Banner. The latter's convincing victory proved that Wise had overreached himself, and enabled Salvidge to crush the independent power of the Protestant organizations and restore them once again to the Tory obedience.

1905 was a turning point in Liverpool politics in another important respect, for it saw the departure of C.F. Aked from the local scene. Despite the narrowness of his temperance views Aked had come to occupy in municipal politics a unique place as the sole liaison between Liberal radicalism, the Co-operative movement and the Liverpool Fabians, whose executive often met in Pembroke chapel and whose members were not above acknowledging Aked as their intellectual mentor. (There had even been a move, supported by Bruce Glasier, to put forward Aked as independent Labour and Nonconformist candidate against Rutherford in 1903, though this had not materialised⁽¹²⁵⁾). Now, the Liberal and Labour movements would go their separate ways, and the latter, whose representation rose from 2 to 6 in the Council elections of 1905, would no longer in its vital formative years have the benefit of informed Liberal tutelage, but would be

forced to fall back upon its own Fabian secularist or Irish Nationalist antecedents. In the long run this would be a heavier blow to Nonconformist influence in political life than the eclipse of the Passive Resisters.

That influence during the last eight years before the First World War became increasingly tangential to the intricate complexities of Liverpool politics. In the General Election of January 1906 it is remarkable chiefly for its absence. With the national tide running strongly in their favour the Liberals this time decided to contest every constituency except the inevitable Scotland where Tay Pay still reigned supreme, East Toxteth where Austin Taylor's uncompromising free trade views decided them not to oppose him (Taylor was actually to cross the floor of the House a few weeks later), Kirkdale which was abandoned to Labour, and West Toxteth where, the Liberal candidate being absent in South America, Labour in the person of James Sexton again intervened, to the considerable annoyance of the Liberal organization. Of the four candidates chosen, only one, R.D. Holt (West Derby) was a Nonconformist, a fact remarked on by the local press⁽¹²⁶⁾.

Free trade dominated the election, though the recent acquittal of Sir Edward Russell at the Liverpool Assizes following his allegedly libellous attacks on the Licensing Bench had revived the temperance issue. Education was not an important topic, except in so far as Mr. A.C. Tobin, K.C., the Tory candidate in Scotland, appealed to the Catholic voters there on the issue of church schools⁽¹²⁷⁾, a stratagem which seemed justified when Augustine Birrell reappeared in the city to make eloquent pleas from the Liberal platform for a completely secular educational system. (For this he was applauded by the Welsh electors of Everton, but denounced by Bishop Chavasse)⁽¹²⁸⁾. Alone of the Liberal candidates Mr. E.G. Jellicoe, an Englishman who had lived in New Zealand for 23 years and had only just arrived in time to conduct his campaign in the Walton Constituency, thought the Nonconformist vote worth his wooing, which may explain why his conservative opponent, the then almost unknown F.E. Smith, took the trouble to dilate on Nonconformist inconsistencies⁽¹²⁹⁾. The Passive Resisters held no meeting in support of the Liberals till January 9th when the campaign was nearly over, and even then it was a sparsely attended gathering in Norwood Congregational Schools⁽¹³⁰⁾.

Following the national trend the Conservatives lost two Liverpool seats to the Liberals, Exchange to Mr. R.R. Cherry, K.C. by 121 votes, and Abercromby to Major Seeley by 199. It was remarkable that it was the two middle-class constituencies where the Free Trade issue had led to the transference of a large

segment of the business vote to the Liberals, and that the working classes of Kirkdale, Walton, West Derby and West Toxteth had, as the Daily Post pointed out, remained unmoved by any issue except the religious⁽¹³¹⁾. Even at the end of the great Conservative rout (and the Liverpool constituencies had polled after most of the English results had been declared), Salvidge's organization had proved itself unshakable⁽¹³²⁾.

Protestantism remained the only lively issue in Liverpool politics, especially in 1910 when George Wise was clapped into gaol and in the immediate pre-war years when huge demonstrations took place in support of the rights of Ulster. Even the great Transport Strike of 1911 which threatened for a time to unite Catholic and Protestant workers and to presage a movement away from religious strife to more genuinely economic grievances did not really call a halt to these age-old animosities. In Corporation affairs the Liberal party dwindled not so much numerically as by the gradual levelling down of the social standing of the Councillors, as Liberal and Tory 'men of substance' abandoned service to the municipality for the more rewarding cultivation of their business interests, or else preferred election to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, a silent revolution in local government which did not escape the notice of shrewd contemporary observers, especially the future Lord Woolton⁽¹³³⁾. Almost alone the Rathbones strove to keep alive the family sense of civic obligation, and by 1909 three members of the family, Herbert, Lyle and Eleanor, had secured places on the City Council, but even this remarkable trio found their distinctive position harder to maintain as time wore on.

Just after the First World War had begun, Herbert Reynolds Rathbone was about to terminate his mayoralty convinced that his work on the Education Committee, especially his ceaseless and successful endeavours to find a solution to the denominational problem, had won him the golden opinions of all parties⁽¹³⁴⁾. Yet his final decision as Lord Mayor, to allocate £20,000 out of the Town Hall Funds, to the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association, drew bitter criticism from Tory and Labour opponents who openly accused him of using public moneys 'to keep the Rathbone clique in power' beyond the allotted span of office⁽¹³⁵⁾. It had not been thus in the past, and these unhappy exchanges seem in retrospect the swan song, not only of the moral idealism of 'our old families', but of the lingering influence of the Nonconformist conscience in the life of the city.

EPILOGUE

Epilogue

Church History, the 'soft option' of the unwary researcher⁽¹⁾ becomes more bewilderingly complex the more it is studied in depth and its ramifications into secular life appreciated in their full significance. Where, as with modern church history in an urban setting, so many different methodologies are available, the predilections of the present writer must seem distressingly old-fashioned, for the twin bases of his approach have been to discern the changing outer forms of the religious communities and the inner spiritual energies which support and sustain them⁽²⁾. For underscoring the latter he would make no apology, believing with a noted expert on the period that 'theology stands to religion as aesthetics to art, harmony to music or prosody to poetry'⁽³⁾. Dr. Elliot-Binns deals of course with the grand sweep of English thought in its theological aspect: on our more humdrum level religion implies perhaps no more than a common place tale of churches opening and closing and theology little else than the occasional literary productions of a few exceptionally alert minds. (There nevertheless appears a very close connecting link between theological emphasis on the one hand and popular religion on the other in the phenomenon of Revival - hence the importance assigned to this subject in the foregoing pages).

There is also the sociological dimension (or, if all religious history is in a sense sociological, the churches' particular impact on non-religious social phenomena), never, it is hoped, far below the surface of the present work, but never allowed to dominate the principle themes so as to make the narrative topheavy with the horrid jargon of behavioural scientists and computer enthusiasts. The backcloth of this present survey must be the transformation of the Christian church from being the depository of the community's spiritual experience, the dispenser of the gifts of grace, the home of its soul and the instrument of its redemption into what J.N. Figgis defined as a sphere of activity 'entirely departmentalised' within a secular society from whose life and manners Christianity could at the popular reckoning be left out of account⁽⁴⁾ - this is the disintegrating force at work within the period under review. There is however a contrary unifying theme, for though by 1786 the Church had already abdicated its claim to a direct authority over a controlled economy and society, for the next hundred years or more Christian businessmen and civic leaders of widely differing denominational backgrounds continued to exercise an indirect but omniscient influence in a now independent economic sphere⁽⁵⁾. Once again the theological and sociological aspects of the Church's

development appear to merge in an uneasy synthesis.

A recent work goes however a long way towards defining the issues at stake more sharply. Dr. Eric Rust, whose book⁽⁶⁾ fulfils a real need - the reconstruction of a contemporary and relevant theology of history - remarks that Christians must always be confronted by 'an eschatological tension between the Church and the world such that the Lordship of Christ over both is affirmed, and yet their distinction is maintained'. Here perhaps is the touchstone of the Church's loyalty to the historic faith in every age, and applied to the local situation which it has been our task to examine, the Dissenting churches of Liverpool acquit themselves with honourable distinction. Only in the case of a few extreme Calvinist groupings did they withdraw into a hot house of private pietism; only in the abysmably tragic phase of the Social Gospel was the tension between sacred and secular abolished altogether, and the Christological foundations of Church and Society inextricably confused.

From a broader standpoint, some of those trends and tendencies which historians have read into the development of urban civilization, and of the church's role in an industrialised society, seem in this one locality conspicuous by their absence. Where in Liverpool is Towney's 'abdication by the Christian Churches of one whole department of life, that of social and political conduct, as the sphere of the powers of this world, and of them alone'? Where moreover are Matthew Arnold's Philistines? If the philanthropic achievement of nineteenth century Liverpool would have been impossible without its Nonconformist stimulus, its cultural life, particularly on a popular level, would have been poorer almost to the point of non-existence⁽⁷⁾. On a national level too the world of Victorian scholarship and imaginative literature would have been marginally poorer had the Liverpool Unitarians not produced the Roscoe family or Dr. Jevons, the Presbyterians Mrs. Oliphant, the Baptists Augustine Birrell and Le Gallienne, the Congregationalists Sir Henry Lucy.

There are several creatures of recent historidal imagination who likewise fail to appear in this particular locality. Fritz Redlich's 'deimonic entrepreneur' has not materialized, not even in his lesser manifestations like the 'hard-driving bosses loathed by and isolated from the masses', Mr. Richard Cobb's curious description of the Nonconformist Jacobisⁿ of the 1790's⁽⁸⁾. Only one major conclusion of recent scholarship has in fact been borne out by the Liverpool evidence: Nonconformist business and commercial success now appears to be less dependent upon the acquisitive spirit their religion is supposed to foster than on what Professor Briggs has called 'the web of confidence within

the (sectarian) grouping which facilitated a network of business transactions, including borrowing and lending' (9).

To contemplate the complex of activities in which these Liverpool Dissenters engaged themselves is to be astonished at the sum total of their achievements, their civic accomplishments as well as their commercial ascendancy, the breadth of their philanthropy as much as the pains they took to interpret their economic success in the light of New Testament ethics or other philosophical principles. Their sheer capacity for work, or overwork, of all kinds shames the generations which succeeded them, and if the religious organizations they constructed seem in the present ecumenical context largely churches of the Task Accomplished, they could neither have understood or sympathised with our contemporary inability to reshape the pattern of our Christian witness to the totally changed circumstances of today.

LIVERPOOL NONCONFORMITY 1786-1914

NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND MAP

Abbreviations employed in notes and bibliography:-

A.H.R.	= American Historical Review
C.Y.B.	= Congregational Year Book
Ec.H.R.	= Economic History Review
L.R.O.	= Liverpool (City) Record Office
M.A.C.	= Methodist Archives Centre, London
P.M.	= Primitive Methodist(s)
P.R.O.	= Public Record Office
P.W.H.S.	= Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society
T.C.H.S.	= Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society
T.H.S.L.C.	= Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
T.U.H.S.	= Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society
U.M.	= United Methodist(s)
U.M.F.C.	= United Methodist Free Churches
U.P.	= United Presbyterian(s)
W.M.A.	= Wesleyan Methodist Association

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

NOTES

1. In 1786 Liverpool handled $\frac{1}{3}$ of the British, and $\frac{3}{7}$ of the total European Slave Trade: E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1954), 63.
2. *Social Survey of Merseyside, I* (1934), 20.
3. The shipbuilding industry was of course in the 1840s and 50s transferred to Birkenhead, but ship repairing remained quite important for some years afterwards.
4. C. Petrie, *The Victorians* - (1960), 280.
5. *P.W.H.S., Vol I* (1897-8), 108.
6. The best descriptions of Liverpool in the 1780s and 90s are those found in Moss' *Liverpool Guide* (1794); T. Kaye, *The Stranger in Liverpool* (1810); J. Aspinall, *Liverpool A few Years Back* (1852); R. Brooke, *Liverpool During The Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century* (1853) and J. Stonehouse, *Recollections of Old Liverpool* (1863).
7. G. M. Trevelyan, *Life of John Bright* (1913), 201.
8. Many of these workers came from the Cheshire salt fields, and Garston thus provides a singular exception to Liverpool in recruiting immigrants from areas of similar economy in other parts of the country: in Liverpool itself there is hardly any correlation between the previous occupations of the immigrants and those subsequently assumed on arrival.
9. *Social Survey of Merseyside, I* (1934), 30 f. Parts of West Derby and Toxteth Park, together with Everton and Kirkdale, were included in the Liverpool Parliamentary Constituency in 1832, and in the borough of Liverpool in 1835. Bootle received county borough status in 1868. In 1895 Walton, Wavertree, the rest of Toxteth Park and another part of West Derby were included in the city. Garston was absorbed in 1902, Fazakerley in 1905, Allerton, Childwall and both Wooltons in 1913.
10. See H.J. Hanham, *Elections and Party Management* (1959), 285 f; M. Simey, *Charitable Effort in Nineteenth Century Liverpool* (1951), 12f
11. W.W. Biggs, *Some Reasons For the Conservatism of Liverpool* (n.d.), passim.
12. The town which was a pioneer in so many fields, of public health, water supply and corporation housing, can hardly be accused of lack

of municipal enterprise - there remains nevertheless the curious contradiction between this activity and its surprising indifference to the political and moral issues which stirred the rest of the nation.

13. T. Fletcher, *Autobiographical Reminiscences* (1893), 33. On the periphery of the town stood three other Presbyterian chapels, Toxteth Park, Prescott and Gateacre. Within the town itself there had between 1763 and 1776 existed a third temple of Rational Dissent, the famous Octagon, whose story has often been told - see especially A. Holt, *Walking Together* (1938), chapter 7. The two facts chiefly emphasised about this venture, that it was designed to win over 'enlightened' adherents of the Established Church, and to this end used the first Nonconformist Liturgy ever compiled, should not be allowed to disguise two others: that it pressed Rational Christianity to such an extreme that it really stood somewhere on the borderland of Deism (the Liturgy's invocation of the 'Supreme Being' likens it to Robespierre's religious experiments in Jacobin France), and that it attracted some of the most curious, fractious and unbalanced persons who ever assembled in a place of worship in Liverpool. Very few Anglicans were of course won over by its cold, dismal services, and most, particularly John Wyke, the clockmaker and banker, subsequently returned to the old paths, taking quite a number of former Presbyterians with them - see T.U.H.S., Vol. III, 67f.
14. A. Holt, *op. cit.*, 150.
15. Possibly this was due to the fact that his congregation embraced a wide range of theological opinion, from Trinitarianism to Deism (*Monthly Repository*, 6 (1811), 697): reticence in such cases was desirable, though Lewin did not hesitate on occasion to defend the rights of the congregation against the aggression of the 'aristocratical' seat-holders - *Monthly Repository*, 20(1825), 180.
16. S.A.T. Yates, *Memorials of the Family of the Rev. John Yates* (1891), 8.
17. The denominational allegiance of the Ashton family is hard to determine. Nicholas Ashton, the son of John, and the most vigorous opponent of his sister's second marriage to a poor parson, who owned a large saltworks in Liverpool and engaged as readily in privateering as in radical politics and cultural pursuits, was certainly an Anglican and held two pews in Childwall Church - J. Hoult, *Scrapbook* (n.d., mss. preserved in Liverpool City Library), 146 - but his son, Joseph, though educated at Eton, is mentioned in the title deeds of Paradise Street Chapel, and seems

17. Cont.

occasionally to have attended there - see T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 102 (1950), 165-166.

18. S.A.T. Yates, *op. cit.*, 47.

19. J. Hughes, *Liverpool Banks & Bankers* (1906), 75.

20. *Monthly Repository*, 22 (1827), 122.

21. H.D. Roberts, *Hope Street Chapel* (1907), 320 f.

22. Some of these are most intriguing, especially his attempts to demythologise the teachings of Jesus, or, as he expressed it, 'free them from the vulgar prejudices of their day'.

23. H.D. Roberts, *op. cit.*, 275.

24. Here there is some disagreement. Miss Holt suggests that the Langs, McQuoids, McKnights, Murrays and Wallaces who appear in the chapel registers of the late eighteenth century suggest a 'sprinkling' of Scots: on the other hand, a survey of Liverpool churches drawn up by a certain Mr Whitaker in 1792 (*Holt and Gregson Papers*, 19, 211) states that 'the greater number of auditors (of the two chapels) consists of inhabitants settled in the town of Scottish extraction'.

25. The Baptismal Register of Benn's Garden and its successor, Renshaw Street, has survived from 1770 to 1837 and the Burial Registers from 1819 to 1837. The Kay Street records are complete from the 1750s.

26. He died in 1795, and a tablet was erected in Paradise Street Chapel by his nephew, Thomas. See J. Boardman, *Table Talk* (1882 edition), 16.

27. See T. Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 33 f.

28. *Liverpool Mercury*, 26th August 1833 (obit. notice).

29. It is most important to note that this Holt is no relation at all to the more famous Holt family (of Lamport and Holt, and the Ocean Steam Ship Company) which first made its appearance in Liverpool in 1807. Thomas Holt (1773-1845) who married one of the daughters of Robert Lewin was a member of a family native to Liverpool since at least the sixteenth century, but in the nineteenth they were entirely eclipsed by the descendants of Rochdale - born George Holt - see T.U.H.S., Vol. 7, 79 f. Two most distinguished Unitarian historians of recent times are both descended from these two families, R.V. Holt from the older line, Miss Anne Holt from the younger.

30. A.H. John, *A Liverpool Merchant House* (1959), 10f.
31. ed. E. Axon, *Memorials of the Family of Nicholson* (1928), 142.
32. *Liverpool Mercury*, 22nd Nov. 1833 (obit. notice). The Prestons later conformed and were prominent in Tory politics.
33. *Liverpool Mercury*, 4th Sept. 1830.
34. E. Axon, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
35. These were in succession Richard Heywood (1751-1800) and his brother Arthur (1753-1836). Their father, Arthur Heywood Senior, continued to reside in Liverpool till his death in 1795. See Gregson MSS, I, 145; Hughes, *op. cit.*, 91f; *Liverpool Mercury*, 16th Sept. 1836 (obit. notice of Ric. Heywood).
36. Cited in E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in An Industrial City* (1957), 48.
37. Of this body James Currie was in the 1780s President, Avison and Roscoe successive vice-presidents. In the annual collections for the Blind Asylum, Paradise Street (successor of Kay Street) usually headed the list, often contributing more than all the other churches combined - see for example the figures given in Billinge's *Advertiser*, 2nd April, 1798.
38. R. V. Holt, *The Unitarian Contribution To Social Progress in England* (1952 edition), 264.
39. S. G. Checkland in *Ec. H. R., N. S.*, 5 (1952), 64.
40. One of the features of the Unitarians' nineteenth century development will be the manner in which this trickle of writing on moral, economic and political topics assumes the proportions of a flood-tide.
41. Joseph Clegg was mayor in 1748, Joseph Davies in 1749, James Crosbie in 1753 and G. Campbell in 1763. See the interesting list of the pewholders of 1727, together with their civic honours, printed in A. Holt, *op. cit.*, 117f.
42. For Hardman see Holt and Gregson Papers, 31 (Election of 1754);

- Gregson MSS, I, *passim*. William Roscoe acquired the Allerton hall estate in 1795 (J. A. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool* (1875), I, 212). His father had probably been at one time the Hardman's butler.
43. N. C. Hunt, *Two Early Political Associations* (1961), 129f.
 44. Despite the fact that many of them, particularly Joseph Clegg the brewer, a remarkable social radical (see T. N. Morton MSS in Liverpool City Library) whose family later conformed, contributed largely to the success of Sir William Meredith at the Parliamentary election of 1761, the first time that the close Corporation's traditional control over the election of Liverpool's two M.P.s had been successfully challenged - see *A Selection From the Early Letters of the Rev. William Shepherd* (1835), 5.
 45. A. Holt, *op. cit.*, 126.
 46. S. and B. Webb in *English Local Government, the Manor and The Borough* (1963 edition), 481-491, give a description of the Corporation at this time, and find its activities wholly praiseworthy. For a less favourable view see E. Platt and R. Muir, *A History of Municipal Government in Liverpool to 1835* (1906).
 47. Thomas Earle, the local Whig leader, was a prominent slaver, as was General Tarleton, one of the two M.P.s, who often voted with the Whigs in the House of Commons.
 48. I. Sellers in *Baptist Quarterly*, 20(1964), 195f, 277f.
 49. E. Owen, MSS *History of Byrom Street Chapel* (Liverpool City Library).
 50. Quoted in *Liverpool Daily Post*, 26th Aug. 1925. Sources for Medley's life include: *Memoirs of the late S. Medley* compiled by his son (1800); S. Medley, *Memoirs of Samuel Medley* (1833); *Monthly Magazine*, 1800, 273; *Baptist Magazine*, 1861, 235; *Baptist Reporter*, 1864, 388; *Gentleman's Magazine*, Dec. 1801; J. Ivimey, *History of British Baptists* (1811-30), 4, 590f; D. Thom, *Liverpool Churches and Chapels* (1854), 43f. A bundle of his sermons survives in the library of Regents Park College, Oxford.
 51. On August 4th 1789 at the age of 84, he married for the second time - *Liverpool Advertiser*, 10th Aug. 1789. His career was

- full of bizarre incident. In 1746 he had taken up arms against the Pretender: it was his absence from Byrom Street on this occasion which provided his opponents with their opportunity to oust him.
52. For the Johnsonians see R. Dawbarn, *History of A Forgotten Sect* (1912); E. Deacon, *Samuel Fisher, Minister* (1912); *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, 3, 54-61; MSS history of Stanley Street Chapel in E. Owen papers.
 53. B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, 6, (1893), 103.
 54. The Raffles MSS contain the original petition of this congregation, requesting financial support to help them build a chapel.
 55. B. Nightingale, *op. cit.*, 98.
 56. These included their two leading supporters, Benjamin Hunter, disowned for debt in 1720, and Robert Haydock, disowned for drinking to excess and disorderly practices in 1746.
 57. It is seldom realised that Liverpool nearly lost the Rathbone family when in 1743 William was about to go abroad. However, as a Quaker minister he reflected that 'his appointed station was his native place where a field of religious labour was opened before him' - see J. Murphy, *The Old Quaker Meeting House in Hackins Hey*, in *T.H.S.L.C.*, Vol 106 (1954), from which most of the data in this paragraph are taken.
 58. The Rev. John Breckell of Kay Street Chapel had preached vigorously against them on this score in 1745 - see H.D. Roberts, *op. cit.*, chapter 7.
 59. Cited by J. L. and B. Hammond, *The Town Labourer* (1920), 270.
 60. *P.W.H.S.*, Vol. 2, 65f.
 61. *Ibidem*, Vol 7, 102.
 62. *Ibidem*, 20, 20f. '1758: preached to a congregation containing many rich and genteel people whom I did not at all spare'. '1764: the house was full enough. Many of the rich and fashionable were there and behaved with decency'. '1783: here the scandal of the Cross is ceased, and we are grown honourable men'.
 63. E. R. Wickham, *op. cit.*, 56.
 64. It is notoriously difficult to trace the social evolution of individual Wesleyans at this period, but J. A. Picton's account of his father-in-law, Henry Pooley, is most illuminating. One of Wesley's first converts in Liverpool, Pooley, who went to the parish church in the morning and Pitt Street at night, usually ran the gauntlet to the latter through a hostile

64. Cont.

mob, catcalling the 'Methody blacksmith'. Soon however he was prospering, became a wealthy shopkeeper in Castle Street, and forsook the chapel. But as soon as he failed in business he abandoned the Church and worshipped permanently with the Methodist bretheren - J. A. Picton, Life of Sir James Picton (1891), 71f. Pooley's story is probably not untypical of many.

65. J. Everett, Life of Adam Clarke (1849), I, 206. By this time the preacher, in addition to his allowances for 'dyatt', rum, shaving, brimstone for ridding his house of bugs and all the other necessities which the thoughtful Methodists provided for him, was also in receipt of 21 6d. a week for a servant - see P.W.H.S., Vol 14, 172f.

66. T. P. Bunting, Life of Jabez Bunting (1887), 101.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

NOTES

1. Monthly Magazine, 3(1797), 202; 10(1801), 498; 11(1801), 9.
Twenty years later the Rev. Thomas Chalmers was still lauding the social cohesion of commercial towns where the mutual dependence of the classes was never so conspicuous as in their common attendance at worship, as opposed to the class conflicts of manufacturing areas 'where the atmosphere may at length become so pestilential as to wither up the energies of our church' - T. Chalmers, *The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns* (1821), 1, 27.
2. The pattern of all these endeavours was to found a Sunday School first, with adult services following later.
3. This institution, later known as the Mersey Mission To Seamen, was in its early days not entirely an Anglican foundation. Its chief promotor was in fact the Presbyterian, Alexander Balfour.
4. Porcupine, 8, 28.
5. A. Armstrong, *These Fourscore Years* (1909), 34.
6. D. Thom, *Liverpool Churches and Chapels* (1853), 43. For Aitken see further C. Bodington, *Devotional Life In the 19th Century* (1905), 76f.
7. See his article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1838; *Liberal Review*, 11th Oct. 1884; *Liverpool Review*, 20th June 1903.
8. R. L. Evans, *A century of Mormonism in Great Britain* (1937), 42f.
9. *Liverpool Mercury*, 4th January 1850.
10. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 25th Feb. 1886.
11. The phrase was actually used of Brown by the *Procupine* in its issue of 13th Feb. 1886.
12. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 2nd March 1886. If the authentic notes of Christianity were absent from Brown's popular preaching, what of the political democracy of which he is said to have been such an able advocate? The lecture on 'The Upper and Lower Classes' (Lectures to the Working Men of Liverpool, Series 1, (n.d.)) reveals that Brown rather vaguely and naively placed his trust in the natural democratic spirit of Englishmen to bring about "perfect equality in political rights and an end of all class legislation". This, aided by the extremely mobile character of the English social structure, would eventually harmonize the classes, and end 'the trade of the agitating demagogue who would set class against class'. At last government would be in the hands 'not of an aristocracy of blood

12. Continued
money or intellect, but of chracter' - the sort of chracter, presumably which it was the aim of his ministry to foster.
13. The Revival, 6th August 1859.
14. Ibid., 17th September 1859.
15. The Record, 13th January 1860.
16. U.M.F.C. Magazine for 1860, 644.
17. The Revival, 28th April 1860.
18. See J. Ratcliffe, Recollections of Richard Ratcliffe (1896), passim.
19. The Revival, 6th April; 6th, 20th July; 9th, 16th, 30th Nov., 21st Dec. 1861.
20. The Freeman, 31st December 1862.
21. Mrs W. P. Lockhart, W. P. Lockhart (n.d.), 48.
22. Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1864, 179.
23. All the careful investigations of the French religious sociologists into social milieu as the determining factor in missionary success underlines rather than resolves this dilemma. For the American church historian's hostility to his 'secular positivist' critic, see H.F. May in A.H.R., Vol. 70 (1964), 89f. which discusses their respective approaches to the problem of religious revivals.
24. Porcupine, 18, 602, 714.
25. Liverpool Review, 1886, 10.
26. Ibid., 683.
27. Porcupine, 20, 12.
28. W. P. Lockhart, op. cit., 222.
29. Porcupine, 1, 273.
30. This activity led to Lockhart's being threatened with prosecution, and to Ratcliffe's actual imprisonment. Another contemporary means of evangelism (not generally approved of) was the accosting of persons in the street with questions about their spiritual condition. D.M. Drysdale, a timber importer, was the only Liverpool business man who did this on any scale, and he it was who actually enquired into T.H. Huxley's soul-state, an episode which led to the Professor writing a strong letter to The Times. Drysdale, the most perfervid of Liverpool's lay evangelists, also illustrates another chracteristic of many of these men: once immersed in evangelistic work, their own denominational allegiance was often lost sight of. Thus the city

30. Continued
- learnt with surprise, and only on the occasion of his death, that Drysdale was a Baptist. Ratcliffe seems to have belonged to no particular denomination at all.
31. A surprisingly large number of Liverpool Nonconformists, W.S. Caine, S. Williamson, W. Crosfield, W.P. Sinclair and T. Snape secured political honours for constituencies outside Liverpool at about the same time, or slightly later.
32. Porcupine, 16, 740.
33. Ibid., 795.
34. Ibid., 728.
35. Ibid., 756. Besides his failure to attract the working class, Moody, as the Liverpool Critic pointed out (10th February, 1877), had another conspicuous failure - the businessmen of the Liverpool Exchange. Few, who were not already churchgoers, were attracted at all: Mr Balfour's free breakfasts for businessmen, a curious attempt to adapt an institution of back-street evangelism to the needs of a totally different class, failed to attract more than a dozen at the most.
36. Porcupine, 16, 790.
37. Liverpool Review, 29th Oct. 1887.
38. See the account of his life in Evan Owen papers (L.R.O.).
39. Liverpool Review, 17th Feb. 1883.
40. Liverpool Review, 7th April 1883. Hengler's Circus was used by Moody on this occasion, with overflow meetings in the College Hall, Shaw Street. Only one new charge was brought against the evangelist on this second visit - he was accused of 'making a fortune which even an oil magnate might envy' - ibid, 14th April 1883.
41. This list of activities is taken from the Mill Street Mission entry in the Myrtle Street Baptist Church Manual for 1885 (L.R.O.).
42. In the religious census of 1881, the evening attendance at Hengler's Circus was given as 3543, a phenomenal, and surely exceptional, number.
43. Liverpool Daily Post, 28th Dec. 1897.
44. Liverpool Review, 29th Oct. 1887.
45. J. Gunn, John Barnabas Bain (1897), passim.
46. Liverpool Review, 24th Sept. 1887.
47. Liverpool Review, 3rd Sept. 1887.

48. Liberal Review, 9th, 16th Aug; 6th Sept. 1879.
49. Liverpool Review, 11th Oct. 1884.
50. Liverpool Review, 21st April 1883.
51. A brief history of the Union is contained in The Record for 1904 (Evan Owen Papers, L.R.O.).
52. Liverpool Review, 12th Sept. 1903.
53. Liverpool Daily Post, 12th April 1937. 14th, 16th and 21st Reports of the Church of God, Brunel Street (L.R.O.).
54. For comparative figures, see K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Worship in 1851' in Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 11, 74f.
55. Swedenborgians, Mormons, Irvingites.
56. H.O. Papers 129 (Ecclesiastical Returns), 462. These attendance statistics are not of course the only criterion of religious activity but are probably the most reliable - see M. Argyle, Religious Behaviour (1958), 23f, and W. F. S. Pickering in British Journal of Sociology, 18 (1967).
57. H. Mann, Religious Worship in England and Wales (1854), cclxi.
59. For Caine see The Porcupine, 19, 425, and references in J. Newton, W. S. Caine M.P. (1907).
60. For Hume see obituary notice in Liverpool Daily Post, 22nd Nov. 1884, and W. F. S. Pickering, Dr Abraham Hume (Unpublished thesis, University of Durham).
61. See especially The Condition of Liverpool, Religious and Social (1858); The Church the Home Missionary to the Poor (1862); State and Prospects of the Church in Liverpool (1869).
62. There is a brief and unsatisfactory reference in H.S. Brown, A Commentary on Liverpool Life; A Lecture Against The Vices of the City (1857), 11.
63. If the second of these two figures is taken as indicative of Roman Catholic strength, it would also be necessary to take into account those Anglicans who attended early morning communion, as the Church Times pointed out a propos the census of 1902: Church Times, 14th Nov. 1902. But such early celebrations were in Liverpool rare, and the numbers attending who did not subsequently attend another service probably insignificant.
64. Free Church Year Book for 1901, 226.

65. It has not been thought necessary by the present writer to separate the Wesleyans from other Methodist bodies, since in Liverpool the non-Wesleyan bodies were comparatively weak. There was here certainly no marked expansion of Primitive Methodism after 1851 which Bishop Wickham finds such a notable feature of the Sheffield scene. Morning attendances of these groups are as follows (the pattern of slow growth and sharp decline was repeated in the evening attendances, though these were proportionately larger).

	1851	1881	1891	1902	1912
P.M.	571	893	786	855	592
U.M.F.C.	(W.M.A.) 803	1,081	699	631	539
M.N.C.	744	205	280	290	109
(Totals:	2,118	2,179	1,765	1,776	1,240)

U.M.

66. Quoted in J. H. Shakespeare, *The Churches At the Crossroads* (1918), 142.

67. R. Mudie-Smith, *The Religions of London* (1904); C. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, 3rd Series, *Religious Influences*, 7 Vols. (1902-3).

68. B. S. Rowntree and S. Lavers, *English Life and Leisure* (1951).

69. E. R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (1957).;

P. A. Welsby, *Church and People in Victorian Ipswich* in *Church Quarterly Review*, April 1963.

70. See for example J. S. Cowan, *Church and People in a Cheshire Town* (Crewe) (duplicated, 1962).

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

NOTES.

1. Wakefield Papers (L.R.O.), 35 (1).
2. The Hermes, 1, 49.
3. H. Ralph, Progress as to the Union of the Scotch Presbyterian Churches in England with the Church of Scotland (1834).
4. T. Hare, Reports of Cases In High Court of Chancery, 4 (1845), 581.
5. Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, 8, 8f.
6. See J. Smith ed., Sermons of Dr David Thom with a memoir (1863), passim.
7. Liverpool Daily Post, 13th Oct. 1890.
8. Porcupine, 6, 198.
9. Porcupine, 19, 506.
10. ed. S. W. Carruthers, Proceedings of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1, (1907), 714.
11. Porcupine 15, 138: see also ibidem, 19, 778.
12. Liverpool Daily Post, 10th July, 1931.
13. Only the Rev. W. Kennedy Moore (1864-76), later tutor in Hebrew at Westminster College, and editor of 'The Presbyterian', is worthy of note.
14. Porcupine, 15, 171.
15. Carruthers, op. cit., 2, 453.
16. An earlier attempt to plant a church in the north end had been made by Oldham Street when the Cockspur Street chapel, re-named St Andrew's, was taken in 1807. This experiment had not lasted for more than three years.
17. Procupine, 15, 74.
18. Porcupine, 20, 71; B. G. Orchard, Liverpool Legion of Honour (1893).
19. He seems nevertheless to have had very little physical contact with the poor on whose behalf he laboured so earnestly. Indeed his attitude was often very patronising: 'public attention is being focussed on the submerged tenth, and something must come out of it', In Memoriam, R. H. Lundie (1895), 160.
20. Liverpool Mercury, 21st Jan. 1895.
21. Liverpool Courier, 21st Jan. 1895.
22. Eight, if we include Islington, nominally a member church, but always regarded by local opinion as a law unto itself.
23. Porcupine, 6, 166.
24. Liverpool Courier, 29th April, 1854.
25. Porcupine, 14, 632; 15, 227.
26. Porcupine, 15, 91; 20, 229.

27. Liverpool Daily Post, 9th Nov. 1886.
28. Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, 4, 61f.
29. A. H. Drysdale, History of the Presbyterians in England (1889), 606.
30. The Black Papers (Presbyterian Church House) have him from Pitcairn - probably wrongly.
31. Hermes, 1, 161; Memorial Sermons by Drs Raffles and Crichton (1840).
32. A £100 share certificate survives in the archives at Presbyterian Church House. This same year, 1827, the Scotch Burghers and Anti-Burghers joined forces as the United Secession Church, which name the Gloucester Street congregation also adopted.
33. This congregation whose only minister was the Rev. Dr Samuel Spence, assembled in succession in Pilgrim Street, Russell Street, Great Crosshall Street and Hunter Street. They used only the 'Psalms of David' in their services; failing to prosper, they broke up in 1840.
34. His sermon to the English U.P. Synod meeting in London in 1864 (Proceedings of the United Presbyterian Church, English Synod, 1 (1877), 49-58) is full of evangelical fervour. A good idea of the missionary concern of the United Presbyterians may be gleaned by reading through this volume, and comparing its contents with the dour solemnities of other Presbyterian bodies.
35. Porcupine, 6, 102; 20, 107; In Memoriam William Graham (1887).
36. See Proceedings of the U. P. Synod, 1, 402, for some examples of his work, and the Liverpool Review, 12th Nov. 1887, for an account of the Gill Street and Crown Hall Missions.
37. The daughter churches of Mount Pleasant were felicitously compared by one Presbyterian in 1867 to the sons of Jacob - Report of a Complimentary Dinner Given to the Revs. Crichton and Graham (1867).
38. According to Porcupine, 15, 39, worship had been conducted here since 1850.
39. Porcupine, 14, 826; 17, 75.
40. Porcupine, 8, 56.
41. Porcupine, 15, 55.
42. Porcupine, 16, 360, 391; 17, 758; 19, 394, 439.
43. Proceedings of the U. P. Synod, 1, 403.
44. Liberal Review, 2nd Dec. 1882.
45. W. R. Nicholl, Life of the Rev. John Watson (1908), 91.
46. ed. F. Watson, From a Northern Window (1911), 223.
47. T. H. Darlow, W. R. Nicholl (1925), 114.
48. Details of this trial of 1897 may be found in Carruthers, op. cit., 1, 744-747.
49. Those who today lament the 'suburban captivity' of the Church and are anxious to learn how it came about could profitably study this volume.

50. The Cure of Souls (1896), 209.
51. Ibidem, 157.
52. A great gulf, it appears, separated the leading novelist of the Kailyard School from the working-class life of his adopted city.
53. Cure of Souls, 73.
54. Liverpool Review, 10th Dec. 1898.
55. H. Davis, Worship and Theology in England, 4 (1962), 110-111.
56. The rise of the Williamsons was however due partly to another factor, a judiciously timed break with their partners and fellow Presbyterians, the Duncans: see W. Hunt, Heirs of Great Adventure, Vol 1 (1951), 45.
57. S. Smith, My Life's Work (1903), 90.
58. R. H. Lundie, Alexander Balfour (1888), 87.

NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

Notes

1. E. R. Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City (1957), 48.
2. C.Y.B., 1875
3. R. Philip, Life and Times of Rev. G. Whitefield (1837), 553.
4. See his volume of sermons 'The Bethel Flag' (1823).
5. C.Y.B., 1859; D.N.B.
6. T.C.H.S., Vol 9, 106.
7. Porcupine, Vol. 5, 165.
8. T. S. Raffles, Memoirs of the Rev. T. Raffles (1865), 68, 351.
9. T.C.H.S., Vol. 9, 116.
10. Congregational Magazine, 1840, 199; B. Nightingale, Lancashire Nonconformity, 6 (1893), 159.
11. T. S. Raffles, op. cit. 303.
12. T. S. Raffles, op. cit., 306.
13. Raffles Centenary Celebrations (1912), 24.
14. Porcupine, 5, 165.
15. T. S. Raffles, op. cit., 211.
16. T. S. Raffles, op. cit., 33.
17. Evangelical Magazine, 1803, 314.
18. Crescent Centenary Celebrations (1900), 6f.
19. Porcupine, 6, 182.
20. G. Gilfillan, Reminiscences, quoted by D. Thom, op. cit., 102n.
21. E. Hassan, Memorial of Rev. John Kelly (1876), 20; Crescent Jubilee Proceedings, (1850), 27.
22. Evangelical Magazine, 1871, 10-15; the Congregationalist, 1877, 587-596; C.Y.B., 1877.
23. See Crescent Centenary Celebrations (1900), passim.
24. The Hermes, 1, 217.
25. Congregational Magazine, 1828, 390.
26. Evangelical Magazine, 1845, 341.
27. Evangelical Magazine, 1831, 259.
28. Evangelical Magazine, 1839, 550.
29. The half-truth that these years saw either no progress at all, or a positive deterioration, is due in the first instance to I.O. Jones

whose Congregationalism in Liverpool (1866) shows the author's horizon circumscribed by the boundaries of his native town.

30. Centenary Issue of the Merseyside Congregationalist, March 1935.
31. Lancashire Congregational Union Centenary Volume (1906), 94f.
32. See H. R. Reynolds' biographical sketch prefixed to Mellor's collected sermons for his struggles with the liberal faction within the Congregational Union of which he was chairman in 1863.
33. Porcupine, of course, found his 'dogmatic positiveness', like his vulgar Yorkshire accent, 'offensive' - Porcupine, 6, 86.
34. Porcupine, 7, 2.
35. Porcupine, 9, 211.
36. Porcupine, 9, 233, 231.
37. For Veitch, see printed sermons in the Liverpool Pulpit, 3, 91; 4, 81, 134, 147; C.Y.B., 1924.
38. Porcupine, 12, 28.
39. Liberal Review, 17th Feb. 1883. See also the Congregationalist, Sept. 1881.
40. For Rogers, see his three books After Forty Years (1918), Through Fifty Years (1927), Impressions of this age by a man of eighty (1933); C.Y.B., 1940.

NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

Notes

1. J. Davis, A Brief Memoir of Richard Davis (1833)
2. The Hermes, 26th April, 1823.
3. This Stanley Street Chapel was by no means the only local hyper-Calvinist Baptist congregation existing in the first half of the century. There were at least three others, and the complicated story of their quarrels and interrelationships may be studied, without profit, in the author's History of Liverpool Baptists, The Minor Churches (1962).
4. For Fisher see W.T. Whitley, Baptists In The North West of England (1913), 287.
5. See S. Saunders, Lectures on Nonconformity, with a brief memoir of the author (1836), passim.
6. The day school in Circus Street, leased to Crescent Street Congregational Church since 1826, was allowed to fall into alien hands and be turned into a bakery and low music hall.
7. The history of Shaw Street chapel, written in the delightful style cultivated by Strict Baptist historians, may be read in Vol. 4 of S.F. Paul, Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists (1962) The term 'Gospel Standard' derives from the fact that in the quarrel over the Eternal Sonship which divided the Strict Baptists into two camps in 1859, Shaw Street took the side of the stricter party whose bond of union was Gadsby's Gospel Standard newspaper.
8. Porcupine, 16th April 1864.
9. Augustine Birrell's description of his father in 'Things Past Redress', as 'a moralist first and Christian afterwards' is certainly wide of the mark.
10. Liverpool Mercury, 18th December 1881.
11. ~~By 1860 they were supporting a day school for 150 scholars, with evening classes for an additional 120, and the usual Provident and Dorcas societies, but in this concern for popular education they were typical of most large Baptist churches of the period: See J. Watson, The Educational Activities of Baptists (unpublished Liverpool M.A. thesis, 1948).~~
12. J. Cropper, Notes and Memoirs (1900); F.A. Conybeare, Dingle Bank (1925).
13. Baptist Annual Register, 1801, 677-78.
14. T. Raffles, The Perfect and Upright Man (1851), 7.
15. The Hermes, 23rd November 1822.

16. Liverpool Mercury, 1st December 1843.
17. Baptist Reporter, 1851, 300.
18. The distinguishing practices of this curious sect included plurality of elders, footwashing, the salutation of the holy kiss e.t.c.
A small group broke away from the Scotch Baptists in 1821 and formed a Sandemannian church which met in Gill Street till it was dissolved in 1840 - see T.H.S.L.C., 1893
19. The bookseller was Mr William Jones who while in Liverpool ran a little periodical, The New Theological Repository (1800-08) and on his removal to London in 1809 became a notable theological writer see D.N.B; Autobiography of William Jones edited by his son (1846).
20. H.S. Brown, Autobiography and Commonplace Book (1887), 57.
21. ibidem, 64.
22. Liverpool Courier, 5th May 1911.
23. Daily Albion, 25th February 1886.
24. Liverpool Mercury, 25th February 1886.
25. ibidem, 27th February, 1886.
26. Porcupine, 6, 118.
27. Liverpool Courier, 25th February 1886.
28. Liberal Review, 25th March 1882.
29. J. Newton, W.S. Caine M.P. (1907), passim.
30. Liverpool Review 27th February 1886.
31. Liberal Review, 9th July 1881.
32. H.S. Brown, Autobiography and commonplace Book (1887), 90.
33. See H.S. Brown, A Commentary on H. Shimmin's Liverpool Life (n.d.) passim.
34. Mrs W. Lockhart, W.P. Lockhart (n.d.), 96, 181.
35. Porcupine, 6, 315.
36. Liverpool Critic, 21st October 1875.
37. Liverpool Review, 1886, 10-11.
38. Mrs Lockhart, op. cit., 241.,

39. Liverpool Mercury, 21th March 1839.
40. E. Owen in his mss. history of Liverpool Baptist Churches (L.R.O.) offers the most interesting suggestion that open membership, open communion churches had no appeal for the working classes who preferred both a more rigid church system and a narrower theology than these liberal churches offered them.
41. The only other one of these fifteen-odd missions to have survived to the present day is Solway Street, now a Baptist church in its own right.
42. He also took in private pupils, one of whom was Richard Le Gallienne the poet, whose father, John, was treasurer of the Byrom Street church.
43. See the present writer's article on Dawson in Baptist Quarterly Review, Vol. 19, No. 8.
44. Porcupine, 7, 512.
45. This is a phase of Baptist history ignored, perhaps deliberately, by most Baptist historians. Methodist historians for whom the social Gospel held fewer terrors are not averse to recalling these days.
46. Liverpool Echo, 7th January 1903. For Aked's political opinions see his sermon 'Gurth, Son of Beowulf' in Changing Creeds and Social Struggles (1893).
47. See his essay 'Physical Degeneration Among The Masses' in E Walters, The Social Mission of the Church (1906).
48. See Aked's ferocious pamphlet, England Free and Sober (1897), written in reply to Lund.
49. T. Healy, Christ On Fifth Avenue (1907).
50. I. Sellers, An Experiment In Humanism (1961), passim.
51. The Baptist, 1889, 217.
52. J. Thomas, Concerning The King (1903), 147.
53. J. Thomas, The Mysteries of Grace (1911), 77.
54. J. Thomas, The Organic Unity of the Penteteuch (1904), 8.
55. J. Thomas, The Dynamic of the Cross (1909), 2.
56. Mysteries of Grace, 17.
57. Dynamic of the Cross, 145.
58. ibidem, 91.

59. Myrtle Street Pulpit, Vol. 1, 28.
60. Concerning The King, 204; The Ideal City (1897); Myrtle Street Pulpit, Vol, 4, 205; ibidem, Vol. 3, 263; The Ideal City, 19.
61. See Thomas' most interesting sermon on the Doctrine of Election, Discourse 13 in The Mysteries of Grace (1911).
62. J. Thomas, Philosophic Foundations (1937).
63. Liverpool Review, 13th January 1900.
64. Myrtle Street Messenger, August 1911.
65. L.M. Birt, The Children's Home-Maker (1913), passim.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

Notes

1. John Wesley's Journal, 6th May 1759.
2. Trust Deed of Mount Pleasant Chapel, May 1790. (Original at Liverpool Central Hall).
3. Letter to Mr Lawrence Frost of Liverpool, 23rd Oct. 1789, quoted in Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society Vol. 7, 138.
4. ed T. Jackson, Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers Vol V (1872) 69f.
5. Letter of John Pawson of Halifax to Charles Atmore of Amlurgh, 15th Sept. 1792 (Methodist Archives centre - hereafter M.A.C.)
6. P.W.H.S., Vol. X (1916), article on Pawson by G. Stampe, based chiefly on his correspondence with Charles Atmore.
7. P.W.H.S., Vol. XVI, 78f.
8. Anon, An Account of Adam Clarke by a Member of his Family (1833), Vol. II, 12-15. The learned doctor was several times attacked and beaten, especially by 'Papists'.
9. See ante, chapter 1, note 59.
The exaggerated loyalism of Wesleyans at this time can only be understood in the light of grossly prejudiced criticism such as this.
10. Now in the Kilham Collection at Hartley-Victoria College.
11. Articles of Agreement, Section 1, Subsection 3 (1795).
12. J. Blackwell, Life of Alexander Kilham (1838), 360. It is also significant that the Liverpool agitation attracted the attention of the Revs. James Mort and Henry Taylor, both of whom had matrimonial difficulties and were in trouble with Conference for 'immorality'.
13. Kilham Papers (Hartley Victoria College).
14. J. Grundell and R. Hall, Life of Alexander Kilham (1799), 106.
15. I. Wolfe to Alexander Kilham, 9th May 1797 - Kilham Papers.
16. A. Cummin to A. Kilham, 7th Jan 1798 - Kilham Papers.
17. See ante, chapter I, note 63.
18. Local Preachers Minute Book of the Liverpool North Circuit (1839-57) 19th Sept. 1845, 5th April 1848, 29th Dec. 1848 - L.R.O.
19. Liverpool Mercury, 8th Jan. 1841: J. Everett's Memoranda (Hartley Victoria College) under date 14th March 1846.

20. B.G. Orchard, A. Liverpool Exchange Portrait Gallery, Series I, 62f.
21. The Porcupine, Vol 7, 313; Vol 8, 301; H. Shimmin, Pen and Ink Sketches (1857); In Memoriam of Liverpool Men (1876), 76.
22. B.G. Orchard, op. cit., Series II, 56.
23. J. Walsh in A History of the Methodist Church In Great Britain, Vol I. (1966), 311.
24. P.W.H.S., Vol XX, 20f; Methodist Recorder, 31st March 1904; Baptismal Register of Leeds Street Chapel, 1808-1813 (Liverpool Central Hall).
25. Liverpool Mercury, 23rd Aug. 1811; H. Meadowcroft, Brunswick Methodist Chapel, a record (1933), passim. See also ante, chapter 1, note 66.
26. Quoted by J. Betjeman, First and Last Loves (1952), 102.
27. Report of the Liverpool Methodist Tract Society, 1830-31 (M.A.C.).
28. Anon, An Account of Adam Clarke (1833), Vol II, 12f, 55f, 328.
29. T.P. Bunting, Life of Dr. Bunting (1887), 318f.
30. T. Jackson, Life of Dr. Newton (1873), 96.
31. Wesleyan Magazine for 1835, obit. notice.
32. Wesleyan Magazine for 1842; The Hermes, Vol 1, 81. The former revival was bitterly attacked by the Rev. J. Gildart, curate of St. Peter's, in a pamphlet which accused local Methodism of 'enlisting the greater part of the lower classes and some of the more ignorant of the higher', and turning them into Jacobins. In a reply J. Fernell, a local preacher and miniature painter, adopted the all-too-familiar argument that his Connexion had actually saved England from revolutionary excesses - Essay on the Origin of Methodism (1806).
33. Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth, Four Periods of Public Education (1862). 285. Congregationalist figures were 10 schools, 2361 scholars on books, 1747 average attendance. The Baptists had 6 schools, 833 on books, and an average of 628.
34. H. Smithers, Liverpool; its Commerce e.t.c. (1825), 250-52.
35. M. Simey, Charitable Effort in 19th Century Liverpool (1951), 21.
36. J. Fernell, The Christian Reconciler (1801).
37. Published in 1850. The only surviving copy appears to be in the Hobill Collection at Hartley-Victoria College.
38. Memoir of the Rev. J. Entwistle by his son (1861), 37; T.P. Bunting, op. cit., 336, 358.

39. Mount Pleasant Chapel Journal, 1814-51 (Central Hall, Liverpool).
40. M. Baxter, Memorials Of Free Methodism (1865), 209.
41. The Circular, 30th April 1830.
42. Liverpool South Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, 29th March 1827. (Liverpool Central Hall).
43. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1830, 340-43.
44. B. Gregory, Sidelights On the Conflicts In Methodism (1898), 77f.
45. A complete file survives in the Hobill Collection. Though a Liverpool publication, it boasted sales in 46 different towns.
46. The Circular, June 1831.
47. Beecham-Bunting Correspondence, 1828 (M.A.C.).
48. Article in The Wesleyan Times, dated 5th Aug. 1850, by J. Bayrom
49. Letter from Kaye to Bunting, 9th July 1834 (M.A.C.).
50. T. Jackson, op. cit., 115.
51. T.P. Bunting, op. cit., 631.
52. Bunting to Edmund Grindod, 2nd March 1831 (M.A.C.).
53. The Watchman's Lantern, 11th March 1835.
54. Liverpool Mercury, 29th March 1881.
55. United Methodist Free Churches Magazine (1877) obit. notice.
56. The 1834 agitation is given a disproportionate amount of space in the present work, simply because this was the only disruption when Liverpool was in the forefront of the Connexional discontents and indeed in some measure gave the lead to other areas.
57. J.A. Picton, Sir J.A. Picton (1891), 131.
58. M. Baxter, op. cit., 227.
59. One of the reasons for the failure of the Association was the centralization of all its activities in this one building, and its failure to establish local congregations at an early stage.
60. Liverpool Mercury, 28th Jan. 1835.
61. He was soon afterwards dismissed. For the Associationists the ministry like so much else was expendable.

62. By this date Wesleyan and Associationist employers were beginning to dismiss workmen who had taken the wrong side in the quarrels:
Watchman's Lantern, 3rd June 1835.
63. Watchman's Lantern, June 1835, 213.
64. Liverpool Mercury, 14th Aug. 1835.
65. Liverpool Mercury, 13th Nov. 1835.
66. Its abundance is due to the fact that the Mr Picton who led the Association movement became the Sir James Picton who founded the Liverpool Municipal Libraries, and presented to them all the material he had collected on this controversy.
67. The insignificance of Dr. Warren's grievances in the Associationist platform is all the more odd in view of the fact that he had at one time resided in Liverpool and been a member of John Russell's class.
68. Watchman's Lantern, Dec. 1834, 31.
69. Watchman's Lantern, June 1835, 287.
70. Liverpool Mercury, 28th Jan. 1835.
71. See for example The Illuminator, Jan and Dec. 1835.
72. The Illuminator, 16th Dec. 1835.
73. Liverpool Mercury, 18th Nov. 1835. 'He compared himself to a caged bird longing to be at liberty, and desiring to wing its flight into the regions of joy and blessedness' - W.M.A. Magazine for 1847 on Joseph Hughes, a Liverpool Associationist.
74. See J.H.S. Kent, Jabez Bunting, The Last Wesleyan (1955), passim.
75. The Illuminator, May 1835, 162.
76. M. Baxter, op. cit., 236.
77. B. Gregory, op. cit., 247.
78. Letter from the Rev. Thomas Stead to Bunting (M.A.C.).
79. C.O. Ladlow, Then and Now (1939), passim.
80. B. Gregory, Autobiographical Recollections (1903), 351.
81. Local Preachers Minute Book of the North Circuit, 1839-57 (L.R.O.).
82. Liverpool South Circuit Minute Book, 1825-75 (Liverpool Central Hall)
83. Aigburth Street Centenary Brochure (1922), 3.

84. See letter dated 14th April 1846 from Robert Twinem to Bunting (M.A.C.).
85. S. Johnson, Edward Sunners (1886), 73.
86. Liverpool Mercury, 5th July 1850.
87. Liverpool Mercury, 7th Nov. 1851.
88. Nor indeed their critics. In 1843 a certain J. Begnon writing from the Liverpool Customs House advised the Home Secretary to abolish the Wesleyan Conference as the Chartists were copying its organization - R.F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working-Class Movements (1937), 218.
89. L. Beaumont, Life of Dr. Beaumont (1855), 230f.
90. See W.B. Carter, The Case Tested (1845) (M.A.C.).
91. Liverpool Mercury, 17th Feb. 1843. This was of course as much a gesture of despair as of friendliness.
92. Liverpool Mercury, 26th April 1844; B. Gregory, Memoir of F.A. West (1873).
93. Despite the seriousness of the protests, and the almost complete absence of local issues, the usual kind of silliness is not entirely absent from this agitation as from the previous ones. Mr Dunstan, an expelled local preacher, made the bizarre remark that he had not been allowed to travel to heaven on the Methodist vehicle because he did not happen to pay the fare: Liverpool Mercury, 18th March 1851. The Wesleyan Reformers of Waterloo, sectarians to a man, petitioned Conference because in its servile attitude to the Church of England it had always refused to recognize Methodism as a Church! - Wesleyan Times, 4th March 1850.
94. Liverpool Mercury, 1st Oct, -29th Nov. 17th Dec. 1850. The Wesleyan Times of 23rd Dec 1850 contains a report on the Liverpool proceedings.
95. Liverpool Mercury, 18th March 1851.
96. See J.H.S. Kent, The Age of Disunity (1966), 98f.
97. C.O. Ladlow, op. -cit.
98. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, Dec. 1860.
99. Liverpool Review, 19th July 1884.
100. See article by J. Hoult in the Methodist Magazine for 1929.
101. Liverpool Review, 2nd June 1883.

102. The Liverpool Review, 27th Feb. 1886 reported a congregation of between 600 and 800, 'all of the lower middle class, the very people whom the Church of England has lost'.
103. M.C. Dixon, Half a Century of Methodism at Lodge Lane (1934)
104. The Porcupine, Vol 6 (1864), 38.
105. Ibid, 150.
106. Liverpool Review, 19th July 1884.
107. The Liverpool Critic, 28th April 1877.
108. Liverpool Review, 15th Oct 1881; 24th April 1886.
109. For Garrett see J.W. Broadbent, A People's Life of Charles Garrett (1900); J. Colwell, Progress and Promise (1887) and C.E. Gwyther, Methodist Social and Political Theory and Practice, 1848-1914, (unpublished Liverpool M.A. thesis, 1961).
110. The Cocoa Rooms fulfilled a most important role in the life of Liverpool dockland. By 1890 they were serving no less than 30,000 meals a day, and the improved temperance figures for that decade owe not a little to their success.
111. In later years Garrett made many efforts to secure a relaxation of the itinerancy system in the Missions. Only a regular minister, he believed, 'could secure the confidence and love of poor, fallen people' - Methodist Times, 29th April 1886.
112. C. Garrett, Loving Counsels (1887). All references in this section are taken from this work, Garrett's sole volume of published sermons.
113. W.B. Glover, Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism (1954), 205.
114. A. Rushton, My Life (1909), Vol 1, 204.
115. To Garrett's credit also stand the Methodist Fire Insurance Company, the Temperance Magazine, and the Home of Rest for Ministers - see minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, 1901, 132.
116. The Crusader, Aug. 1891.
117. Garrett was an opponent of rate-aid for denominational schools, being prepared to hand over the Wesleyan schools entirely to the local authority rather than infringe this principle. Here he clashed openly with Alderman Oulton - Liverpool Review, 28th Nov 1896.
118. Details are given in A Visit To The Liverpool Wesleyan Mission by A London Journalist (1890).
119. Liverpool Review, 17th Sep 1887.

120. Liverpool Review, 26th Nov. 1887.
121. Liverpool Review, 8th Oct. 1887.
122. Wesleyan Conference Handbook of 1912 (Liverpool Conference).
123. Within the Wesleyan body the distinctive features of the two political parties were clearly mirrored. The Liberals tended to be haughty and aloof, as was Mr Samuel Hough, head of the Hough Line of steamers, representative of St. Peter's ward from 1892 to 1902 and a member of the exclusive St. John's. The Conservatives on the other hand are well represented by Alderman Edward Lloyd, councillor for the Everton ward from 1895 to 1907, a solicitor, a member and keen worker at Netherfield Road Wesleyan Hall, and immensely popular with the poorer classes, particularly the tramway employees whom he championed.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

Notes

1. Methodist New Connexion Centenary Volume (1897), 79.
2. See Kilham MSS Index in Hartley Victoria College, Manchester.
3. M.N.C. Minutes, 1800, 7.
4. D. Thom, *op. cit.*, 100.
5. E.J. Brailsford, Richard Watson (n.d.), 39. He also wrote a popular guide to the town, perhaps the first ever to be published.
6. S. Hume, A Memoir of T. Allin (1881), 84f.
7. M.N.C. Magazine, 1859, 559f.
8. S. Hulme, Memoir of the Rev. W. Cooke (1886), 50-57; W. Cooke, Memoir of the Rev. Ralph Waller (1850), *passim*.
9. S. Mills, Memoir of the Rev. W. Mills (1867), 227.
10. M.N.C. Magazine, 1861, 557.
11. J. Petty, History of the P.M. Connexion (1860), 56.
12. Primitive Methodist Jubilee Report, 29th Jan. 1872.
13. It was purchased in 1828 for £600.
14. P.M. Magazine, 1828, 52-54.
15. P.M. Magazine, 1835, 216. See also for Maguire Street an article by H. Simpson in the Christian Messenger, 1875.
16. Petty, *op. cit.*, 511.
17. P.M. Magazine, 1861, 116.
18. P.M. Magazine, 1864, 179f.
19. P.M. Magazine, 1868, 231.
20. P.M. Connexion, Minute Book, 1864, 43.
21. H.B. Kendall, Origin and History of the P.M. Church (n.d.), Vol.2, 268.
22. Liverpool Courier, 31st Oct. 1877.
23. Liverpool Observer, 27th May 1882.
24. Liverpool Review, 6th Oct. 1888.
25. P.M. Magazine, 1883, 571.

26. P.M. Magazine, 1886, 124.
27. P.M. Magazine, 1888, 251.
28. P.M. Magazine, 1892, 316.
29. Liverpool Citizen, 2nd May 1888.
30. P.M. Magazine, 1893, 458.
31. P.M. Magazine, 1899, 875.
32. Kendall, op. cit., Vol 2, 270.
33. Picton at this time was greatly concerned with the Progressive Society of Joiners, Rawlins with all the reform movements of the 1830s and with the founding of the Liverpool Mechanics' Institute.
34. Details from the W.M.A. Magazine, 1843. In each of these chapels between a half and four-fifths of the seats were appropriated. The Associationists did not carry their democratic principles to the point of dispensing with pew rents. See in general U.M.F.C. Magazine, 1896, 'The Free Methodist Movement In Liverpool'.
35. Extensive temperance work was also fostered, to distinguish the Associationists yet more sharply from their Wesleyan opponents.
36. W. Brimelow ed., Life and Labours of William Sanderson (1899), 31.
37. J.A. Picton, Life of Sir James Picton (1891), 137.
38. J.A. Picton, op. cit., 143.
39. M. Baxter, Memorials of Free Methodism (1865), 435.
40. Liverpool Mercury, 4th Feb, 18th March, 7th Oct. 1851.
41. See E. Askew, Handbook of the U.M.F.C. (1887), passim; Liverpool Mercury, 5th August 1852.
42. W.M.A. Magazine, 1853, passim. Shortly after these events Mr Rowland removed to Birkenhead where he passed the rest of his life in complete obscurity.
43. U.M.F.C. Magazine, 1863, 326; 1868, 128.
44. U.M.F.C. Magazine, 1871, 127; 1872, 748. Wellington Road absorbed the congregations of Herculaneum Chapel, which was closed, and a mission in Ebenezer Hall, Miller Street, which was sold to the Baptists.
45. U.M.F.C. Magazine, 1873, 51; 1874, 118.
46. The St. Helens mission churches were originally under the southern circuit, were transferred to the central in 1881, and made an independent circuit in 1894.

47. See U.M.F.C. Magazine, 1870, 267.
48. Both denominations expanded most vigorously in the same two decades, the 60s and 70s, and in similar areas - new lower middle/artizan class housing districts and older parts of the town being vacated by professional families and taken over by the less affluent. Oddly enough the two ex - U.M.F.C. buildings still used as churches - Stuart Road and Wellington Road-are both now occupied by Baptist congregations.
49. Another surprising feature of Free Methodist life in Liverpool is the extremely good press coverage which their activities enjoyed. A casual reader of the local newspapers would easily conclude that their denomination was on a parity with all the others, including the Wesleyan.
50. Several of these, oddly enough, were members of the U.M.F.C. and married into the prominent local families. There is in this fact something highly appropriate: the Free Methodists' posturings in 1834 and 1848 seem in retrospect quaint imitations of what the continental liberals were doing in more serious and less artificially created circumstances.
51. For Snape, see The Methodist Times, 24th July 1890.
52. The Independent Methodists of Liverpool have an extremely well documented history. Apart from the information contained in A. Mountfield, A Short History of Independent Methodism (1905), J.Vickers, History of Independent Methodism (1920) and the Independent Methodist Churches Conference Handbook (1956), all the chapels have produced jubilee or centenary histories, and two have deposited their records in the Liverpool Central Library.

NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHT

NOTES

1. R.V. Holt, The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress (1938), 59.
2. F.E. Hyde in Ec. H.R., Vol 8 (N.S.), 1955, 76.
3. J. Murphy in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 106 (1954).
4. E.B. Saxton in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 111 (1950), article on the Binns Family of Liverpool.
5. T.H. Bickerton, An Historical Sketch of Dr. John Rutter (1910).
6. E. Rathbone, Records of a Family (1931), 88, gives a good account of Cropper's arrival in the town.
7. For Cropper see K. Charlton in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 112 (1960); D.N.B. entry; F.A. Conybeare, Dingle Bank (1925).
8. Rathbone Papers, II.1.9.
9. Monthly Magazine, 1st Dec. 1820.
10. British and Foreign Society Schools Reports, 1832, 1834, 1836.
11. do, 1862, 1863. See also J. Murphy in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 118 (1966).
12. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 41, 153.
13. Liverpool Election of 1832, Squib Book, 78.
14. D.B. Davis in Journal of Negro History, Vol. 46 (1961), 251.
15. For these proceedings see W. Rathbone, Narrative of Events (1804); Proceedings of the Society called Quakers in the case of A Publication Entitled 'A Narrative of Events' (1805); J. Williams, Life of Thomas Belsham (1833), 603; W. Hodgson, Society of Friends in the 19th Century, Vol. I (1875), 29f. From the letters of William Rathbone IV preserved in the Rathbone Papers, there may be gleamed a fascinating record of the mental evolution of an intelligent Quaker businessman at a time of intellectual and political upheaval. Rising early in the morning to learn Latin, and hastening home at night to learn French, Rathbone seized every available

opportunity to digest a most astonishing variety of books; the Scots philosophers, Maththus, Godwin, the French illumines were at this time all 'grist to his mill'. (E. Rathbone, Records, 86). He was in addition associated with some of the more thrustful pioneers of the Industrial Revolution, the Wedgewoods, Daltons, Reynolds and Darbys. His impassioned search for truth seems to have been stepped up at the time of the French Revolution when even his religious terminology undergoes a subtle but very real change: the 'Supreme Being' is substituted for God, whilst references in his correspondence to the Inward Light or Witness of the Spirit disappear under the impact of Hartleyan psychology. Many persons had anticipated that not only the Liverpool society but the whole of English Quakerism would disintegrate as a result of the Rathbone secession - Critical Review, 1st Oct. 1805. In effect no further schisms took place, either in Liverpool or elsewhere, as Rathbone himself confessed in a letter to Priestley dated 24th June 1807 ; Rathbone Papers, II.1.169.

16. J.R. Thompson, Leaves From My Life (1894).
17. Among these honoured Quaker names of the early 19th Century might be included Egerton Smith (1774-1841), founder of the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1833), of the Mechanics and Apprentices Library (1824, the first lending library in the town), of the Night Asylum for the Homeless Poor (1816, the first institution of its kind in England), and above all founder, and for 40 years editor of the Liberal newspaper, the Liverpool Mercury. Smith, a strange mixture of the visionary and the practical reformer, (he seems to have originated the idea of a Mersey Tunnel and was one of the first advocates of scientific fish farming) was the son of a Quaker schoolm^aster and printer, and remained a Quaker all his life, though taking little part in the affairs of the sect - see anon, Egerton Smith, and biographical sketch (1891).
18. The Liverpool Review, 26th Feb. 1887, described at length a Quaker wedding at Hunter Street as a highly unusual event whose old-world charm was worth more than a passing mention.

19. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), 50.
20. J.J. Thornton, *the New Church In Liverpool* (mss. written in 1899 in the possession of the Swedenborg society in Liverpool).
21. For Salmon, see the *Intellectual Repository*, Jan. 1827, 430.
22. R. Hindmarsh, *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem* (1861), 138, 202, 237.
23. Details of these migrations may be read in Thom's *Liverpool Churches and Chapels*. For a short period, between 1842 and 1856, the Swedenborgians appear to have had a second place of worship in the town, Rose Place, Vauxhall Road.
24. For a description of one of their services see *Porcupine*, 16, 327. This most persistent of sects now assembles, as so often in the past, in a private house.
25. G.R. Balleine, *Past Finding Out* (1956), 38.
26. R.L. Evans, *A History of Mormonism In Great Britain* (1937), 42. For a complete account of the early British Mormons see B.H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 1 (1930), *passim*, and J. Smiths' *older History*, Vol. 1 (1902), *passim*.
27. R.L. Evans, *op. cit.*, 103.
28. For an analysis see P.A.M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward* (1965).
29. These both remained in Liverpool till 1933, when they removed to London.
30. *Liverpool Mercury*, 30th July 1850. Mormons from other parts of England and from Europe who were emigrating to America from Liverpool were instructed to fend for themselves and not to presume on the hospitality of the Liverpool Saints: *Millenial Star*, 15th Aug. 1848.
31. *Liverpool Review*, 5th April 1879.
32. *Liverpool Review*, 15th Aug. 1891.
33. A.C. Watters, *History of the British Churches of Christ* (1948), 33. The Rev. Alexander Campbell was the founder of the Churches of Christ in America. The Scotch Baptists differed from his followers chiefly over the mode of administering the Lord's Supper, and on the work of the Holy Spirit in baptism.

34. Gilbert Y. Tickle was chairman of the General Evangelistic Committee of the Churches of Christ from 1855-88 and editor of their newspaper, the Christian Advocate, from 1879-88. He was also a considerable hymnist.
35. The chief differences between the American and English Disciples were the formers' fondness for the title 'Reverend', and the latters' for making the Lord's Supper the central act of worship.
36. Liverpool Review, 16th Feb. 1884.
37. The Daily Post Census for 1902 gives Thirlmere Road: 60 morning, 80 evening; Windsor Street: 30 morning, 62 evening; Upper Parliament Street: 169 morning, 302 evening. The B^otle church was not surveyed.
38. Churches of Christ Year Book, 1917, 131.
39. See H. Davis^e, Worship and Theology in England Vol. IV (1962), 153f; P.E. Shaw, The Catholic Apostolic Church (1946) and for an older account E. Miller, the History and Doctrines of Irvingism, 2 vols. (1878).
40. See Liverpool Review, 9th June 1888. Morning congregations, 164 in 1881, totalled only 120 in 1912.
41. H.O. Religious Census in England and Wales, 129: 20/461.
42. The Porcupine, Vol. 15 (1873), 75.
43. D.J. Beattie, Brethren, the story of a great Recovery (1940), 115f. Dr. Owles had formerly pioneered a medical mission in Liverpool.
44. Anon, A List of Some Meetings in the British Isles, published by J.W. Jordan (London, 1897).
45. Private information from Mr. Michael Thomas, Aigburth, and Mr. James Beavan, Oxton.
46. E.A. Paeston, The Prayer Book Tradition in the Free Churches (1965), 70f; F. Vaughan, History of the Free Church of England (1936), chapters 1 and 2.
47. For Worrall see Liverpool Mercury, 23rd Jan. 1882.
48. F. Vaughan, op. cit., chapters 3 to 6.
49. Information from the Rev. W.B. Makin, minister of Christ Church, Tuebrook.

50. See B. Wilson, *Sects and Society* (1961), for an examination of three of these groups.
51. *Liverpool Review*, 1st Dec. 1894.
52. See *Liverpool Review*, 24th Jan. 1880 for a review of these early efforts.
53. Typewritten history of the First Church of Christ Scientist, Liverpool, in L.R.O.
54. The story of the Liverpool Comtists is entertainingly told by R.W. Egan in *Liverpool Roundabout* (1957). The present writer's 'An Experiment in Humanism' (1961) narrates the known facts about the Rev. Harry Youlden and the ill-starred Liverpool Ethical Church.

NOTES ON CHAPTER NINE

Notes

1. J. Martineau, Three stages of Unitarian Theology in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, Vol. 4 (1891).
2. See E.M. Wilbur, A History of Unitarianism (1945), Vol. 2, 367f; and I. Sellers in Hibbert Journal, April 1963.
3. Quite apart from the Methodists and Orthodox Dissenters, the Established Church retained an aloof 'high and dry' attitude, characterized by periodic aggressiveness towards other communions.
4. See A. Holt, Walking Together (1938), 167 for this incident and the ensuing controversy.
5. A. Holt, op. cit, 168; H.D. Roberts, Hope Street Church (1909), 230f.
6. Monthly Repository, Vol. 8, (1813), 57.
7. Monthly Repository, Vol. 4 (1809), 75.
8. J.E. Carpenter, James Martineau (1905), 397n.
9. T.U.H.S., Vol. 7, 79f.
10. T. Jevons, A Few Reminiscences (1868), 6.
11. H.D. Roberts, op. cit, 328f.
12. Monthly Repository, Vol. 6 (1811), 696-7.
13. Christian Reformer, Vol. 3 (1822), 245.
14. It was Yates' habit to throw himself like this heartily into the Unitarian cause for a short spell of time, and then retreat once again into an old-fashioned, platitudinizing moralism. This had happened previously in 1816 when he came to the rescue of his son who was involved in a Unitarian controversy in Scotland - H.D. Roberts, op. cit, 315.
15. A. Holt, op. cit, 176.
16. It fared far better in manufacturing towns such as Birmingham, small towns, and villages than in great ports such as Bristol or Liverpool.
17. Liverpool Courier, 15th Jan. 1900.
18. Martineau attended the 1838 meetings of this body as an observer only. Renshaw St. chapel did not agree to be represented at all - H.D. Roberts, op. cit., 356.
19. J. Martineau's Preface to Hymns for the Christian Church and Home (1840).
20. J.E. Carpenter, op. cit., 478.
21. The Inquirer, 20th Jan. 1900.
22. H.D. Roberts, op. cit, 373.
23. See T.U.H.S., Vol. 11, 13.;
24. See Martineau's Crimean War addresses printed in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, Vol I (1890).
25. H.D. Roberts, op. cit, 355.
26. A. Holt, op.cit, 187.

27. See Thom's *The Preacher and The Church* (1857), 24: "Jesus taught a religion by being a religion. He is himself the glorious gospel of the blessed God". Thom's little book '*Christ The Revealer*' (1861) comes as closely as 19th century Unitarian thought could come to a position at which orthodox Christians could hardly cavil.
28. See Thom's MSS diary of the early 1830s preserved in the Rathbone Papers, XIII, 2, 1.
29. J. H. Thom, *The Preacher and The Church*, 69.
30. *Ibidem*, 62.
31. See A. Holt, *op.cit*, 212f.
32. Rathbone Papers, XIII, 2, 100.
33. A. Holt, *op.cit*, 210.
34. Rathbone Papers, XIII, 2, 15.;
35. *Christian Life*, 8th Sept. 1894.
36. Rathbone Papers, XIII, 2, 18.
37. H.D. Roberts, *op.cit*, 358; A. Holt, *op.cit*, 196.
38. See Shepherd's series of letters in the *Liverpool Albion* for 1841 reprinted in tract form as '*A Clerical Cabbage Garden*'.
39. T.U.H.S., Vol. 10, 14.
40. Rathbone Papers, XIII, 1, 9.
41. P.H. Wicksteed, *Memorials of the Rev. C. Wicksteed* (1886), 25.
42. H.D. Roberts, *op. cit*, 444; P.H. Wicksteed, *op.cit*, 84.
43. H. MacLachlan, *Records of A Family* (1935), 72.
44. Rathbone Papers, XIII, 2, 4.
45. About this time Renshaw Street raised Beard's salary to the princely sum of £1,200 per annum, and the Porcupine averred that his thought 'had a depth greater than a Kingdley, Stanley, Temple or Maurice could ever attain' - *Porcupine*, Vol. 11, 394.
46. See E. Odgers in *Liverpool Mercury*, 16th April 1888.
47. H. MacLachlan: *op.cit*, 46.
48. *Ibidem*, 47.
49. *Liverpool Review*, 2nd April 1881.
50. This transformation which Beard wrought in his congregation contrasts oddly with his own exaggerated High Churchmanship, his devotion to the Establishment, of which he regarded himself a member, and to which he insisted on paying church rates, and his support of Martineau's curious Free Christian Union schemes which would have destroyed the Unitarian denomination altogether - see MacLachlan, *op.cit*, 57.
51. A. Holt, *op.cit*, 218.
52. *Liverpool Review*, 2nd April 1881.
53. See *Liverpool Mercury*, 10th April 1888 - here again there is a marked similarity between Beard and the Christian radicals of the present day.

54. Monthly Repository, vol. 14 (1819), 127.
55. Christian Reflector, Vol 2. (1821), 275.
56. Monthly Repository, Vol. 15 (1820), 394.
57. Christian Reflector, Vol. 4 (1823), 283.
58. Monthly Repository, Vol. 17 (1822), 191.
59. Christian Reformer, N.S., Vol. 2. (1826), 18.
60. Christian Reformer, O.S., Vol.5 (1824), 168.
61. Christian Reformer, N.S., Vol.1 (1825), 280.
62. See D.T. McColgan, Joseph Tuckerman (1940), passim.
63. J. Martineau in his introduction to Thom's Spiritual Faith, (1895).
64. A. Holt, A Ministry To The Poor (1936), 15.
65. See I. Sellers, Some Social and Political Ideas of Representative English Unitarians (Oxford B. Litt. thesis, 1956), Section 4, passim.
66. See J.H. Thom, Prospectus of the Objects and Plan of a Ministry for the Poor (1836); A. Holt in T.U.H.S., Vol. 6, 44f.
67. T.U.H.S., Vol. 6, 387f, MSS account written by Miss Sarah Bright on the origins of the Domestic Mission movement.
68. J.H. Thom, Jubilee Speech (1886), 4.
69. A. Holt, A Ministry To The Poor, 251.;
70. The Christian Teacher, 1843, 410.
71. M. Simey, Charitable Effort in 19th Century Liverpool (1951), 26f.
72. It was this over-harsh attitude of the Unitarians to the types of eleemosynary activity in which the other churches indulged which led Charles Booth to make his famous condemnation of their Liverpool Domestic Missions: 'they lacked the one thing needful, that which Mary had and Martha had not' - quoted in T.S. and M.B. Simey, Charles Booth, Social Scientist (1960), 227.
73. A. Holt, A Ministry To The Poor, 43.
74. Ibidem, 76.
75. See W.H. Brown, A Century of Liverpool Co-operation (1929), 76.
76. C.A. Piper, A Century of Service, (1959), passim.
77. Liverpool Mercury, 6th Sept. 1830.
78. J. Hughes, Liverpool Banks and Bankers (1906), 56f.
79. See Gentleman's Magazine, 1844,i,96.
80. R.H. Hutton's Introduction to W.C. Roscoe's Poems and Essays (1860), passim.
81. Liverpool Mercury, 12th Nov. 1840.
82. J. Hughes, op.cit., 79; T. Fletcher, Autobiographical Reminiscences (1893), passim.
83. See E. Axon, Memorials of The Family of Nicholson (1928), 142; The Inquirer, 10th May, 1862.

84. S.A.T. Yates, Memorials of The Family of The Rev. John Yates (1891); Liverpool Mercury, 15th Dec. 1855.
85. See D.N.B. entry.
86. A.H. John, A Liverpool Merchant House (1959), passim.
87. T.U.H.S., Vol. 7, 79f.
88. Unitarian Herald, 12th April, 1862.
89. Monthly Repository, Vol. 19 (1824), 302. His sons, George and Edward died 11th Dec. 1842 and 27th April 1847 respectively.
90. Liverpool Mercury, 30th Jan. 1835.
91. His daughter married Robertson Gladstone, brother of the Prime Minister - J. Hughes, op.cit., 103.
92. A.C. Wardle, The Bowring Story (1940); The Inquirer, 26th Sept. 1885.
93. Letters and Journal of W.S. Jevons edited by his Wife (1886), 1-7.
94. See D.N.B. entry.
95. T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 20 (1867/8), 124-5.
96. See 'The Holt Family' in Liverpool Daily Post, 19th Jan, 1903; A Brief Memoir of George Holt (1862).
97. F.H. Hyde, Blue Funnel (1956), passim.
98. See articles on Finch in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 109 (1958) and Vol. 111 (1960).
99. See D.N.B. entry; Christian Reformer, N.S., Vol. 31 (1856), 570f; Vol. 33 (1858), 711, 737f.
100. D.N.B. entry.
101. Sir Adrian Boulton still remains loyal to his family's Unitarian tradition.
102. See G. Melly, Recollections of Sixty Years (1893); W.R. Melly, Recollections of the late Andre Melly (1872); E.F. Melly, Memoirs of C.P. Melly (1889).
103. See T. Jones, Henry Tate (1952).
104. The Inquirer, 4th May 1901.
105. Liverpool Daily Post, 23rd June 1884.
106. See J. Samuelson, Recollections (1907), passim.
107. Currie Papers. Letter of Currie to Creevy, 25th Jan. 1801.
108. The Inquirer, 22nd Feb. 1868.
109. R.D. Thornton, James Currie and Robert Burns (1963), 120.
110. Rathbone Papers. Letter dated 22nd July 1869.
111. E. Rathbone, William Rathbone (1906), 278.
112. Christian Life, 15th March, 1902.
113. It is hardly fair to suggest, as do the Simeys (Charitable Effort, 91) that the Rathbone tradition of 'spiritual noblesse' -always kept them far removed from 'the people' to whom they dedicated their lives. Had this been William Rathbone VI's philosophy, he

113. cont. he would hardly have taken over the duties of one of his District Nurse Superintendents for a whole year in order to find out what the condition of the poor was really like, or done personal visitation for the District Provident Society or the Domestic Mission. The problem was of course far too large for this little group of Unitarians to tackle by themselves. If they are to be criticised at all, it is because in their choice of social workers to carry out their projects they were over-insistent on securing 'our best and most cultivated men' (E. Rathbone, op. cit, 439). Nothing is more odd than Rathbone's founding a curacy in a slum parish in Liverpool, on condition that the recipient of his £300 p.a. had a first-class honours degree (Magazine of the University College of North Wales, June 1902, 13f).
114. The School for the Blind was also supported by Anglicans till odium theologicum supervened in 1820 and the institution came under purely Anglican control - Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol.6, 262f.
115. M.B. Simey, op.cit., 26f.
116. See the Historical Register for Jan. 1845.
117. M.B. Simey, op.cit, 70.
118. See Christian Life, 15th March 1902.
119. G. Melly, Stray Leaves (L.R.O.), Vol. 7, passim.
120. E.F. Melly, op.cit, 67f.
121. The Rathbones had already had experience of fund raising of this kind when in 1847 S.G. Rathbone had undertaken to collect from the town £80,000 for Irish relief. The Rathbones who were very friendly with such figures as Daniel O'Connell, Fr. Matthew and Cardinal Manning subscribed generously to Catholic charities - see Rathbone Papers xi,2,2.
122. E. Rathbone, op.cit, 124f.
123. H.A. Whiting, Alfred Booth (1917), 117; London Figaro, 19th Jan. 1884.
124. The Inquirer, 4th May 1901.
125. S.A.T. Yates, op.cit, 20.
126. E.F. Melly, op.cit, 69f.
127. W.W. Currie, Life of James Currie (1831), Vol. 2, 175.
128. A.H. John, op.cit, 74.
129. H. MacLachlan, The Unitarian Movement (1934), 126-7.
130. J. Samuelson, op.cit, 35.
131. J. Murphy in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 116 (1964), 167f.
132. G.E. Evans, A History of Renshaw Street Chapel (1887), 95.
133. H.D. Roberts, op. cit, 133; T. Fletcher, op.cit, 43f.
134. Monthly Repository, Vol. 22 (1827), 69.
135. T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 87 (1935), 23f.

136. Shepherd Papers (Manchester College, Oxford), Vol. 7, 3.
137. T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 111 (1960), 79f.
138. R. Smiles, Memoir of Henry Booth (1869), 116.
139. Liverpool Mercury, 23rd March 1832.
140. T.U.H.S., Vol. 10, 66f.
141. E. Rathbone, Records of the Rathbones of Liverpool (1913), 172.
142. Rathbone Papers, XI, 2, 2.
143. The Mersey, July 1925, 198.
144. T.U.H.S., Vol. 10, 45f.
145. Rathbone Papers, XII, 2, 100f.
146. A.C. Bradley in Liverpool University College Magazine, Vol. 3 (1888).
147. The Inquirer, 22nd Feb. 1868.
148. S. Marriner, The Rathbones of Liverpool (1961), 5, 121.
149. F.H. Hyde, op. cit, 168.
150. T.S. and M.B. Simey, op.cit, 29.
151. E. Rathbone, Records, 231.
152. A. H. John, op.cit, 40. The same year, 1868, Booth launched an insurance scheme for his own employees. It failed miserably through the opposition of the workmen themselves, but Booth in true Unitarian fashion refused to blame them, but attributed his ill-success to their faulty schooling and turned his attention immediately to the agitation over Forster's education proposals - M.B. Simey, op.cit, 45.
153. F.H. Hyde, op.cit, 161.
154. J. Samuelson, op.cit, 15.
155. A. H. John, op.cit, 160f.
156. S. Marriner, op.cit, 117. Another peculiar feature of the Rathbone House was the mutual criticism of the partners at board meetings, a practice redolent of their Quaker ancestry.
157. E. Rathbone, op. cit, 487.
158. Lawrence Holt, the younger son of R.D. Holt, was appointed secretary of the Joint Committee of dockers and employers who administered the scheme, a fine tribute to the standing of the Holt family in the eyes of both parties.
159. E. Rathbone, Records, 86.
160. R.V. Holt, The Unitarian Contribution To Social Progress In England (1952), 264.
161. D.N.B. entry.
162. R.D. Thornton, op.cit, 164.
163. Anon, A Selection From The Early Letters of William Shepherd (1835), 48.
164. T. Fletcher, op.cit, 67.
165. e.g. Monthly Magazine for 1801, 497.

166. The Currie Papers contain an interesting letter of Currie to Kemble, inviting him to become manager of this venture: Currie Papers, 17th April 1802.
167. R.D. Thornton, op.cit, 378.
168. 'Shut up in this angle between the Mersey and the Irish Sea' - Currie Papers. Currie to Creevy, 25th June 1800.
169. H. Roscoe, Life of William Roscoe (1833) Vol. 1, 205-206.
170. H. Roscoe, op.cit, Vol.2, 148.
171. G. Chandler, William Roscoe (1953), passim.
172. Roscoe's political philosophy, like Currie's, is of minor importance. His defence of natural rights against the utilitarians, and of the rights of property against the Spenceans (Considerations (1808), 214) are both interesting in their way, but his political thought is marred by a frequently reiterated yet naive belief that the Liverpool merchants, about whom he had really few illusions but for whom he wrote and to whom he looked to create the northern metropolis of his dreams, would somehow rise to the level of their responsibilities - a belief which haunted and eluded the Unitarian thinkers of Liverpool throughout the entire century.
173. H. Roscoe, op.cit, Vol. 1, 155.
174. See G. S. Checkland in Economic History Review, N.S. Vol. 5 (1952), 60f.
175. Rathbone Papers, ii, 1, 151.
176. Currie Papers, letter dated July 1791.
177. Roscoe Papers, No. 1108, 7th Feb. 1805.
178. The Liverpool Jacobins have never been given by later literary critics the extended treatment they deserve. On contemporaries they made varying impressions. To honest John Dalton their 'stylish manner of living', was an appalling thing. Hazlitt and de Quincey both had a tolerable acquaintance with them, and disliked them, Roscoe in particular whom de Quincey described as having about him 'the feebleness of the mere belles-lettrist' - Works, ed. Masson, Vol. 2, 127. Savage attacks also appeared in the Edinburgh Review for 1802 and Tait's Magazine for 1837.
179. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 6, 262.
180. He later wrote pamphlets on criminal law reform (1834) and against the Corn Laws (1840).
181. See The Prospective Review, May 1852.
182. R.H. Hutton's Introduction to W.C. Roscoe's Poems and Essays (1860). xxxvi.
183. Liverpool Review, 9th Sept. 1893: this was his solution to the struggle between capital and labour.
184. This hall with its grandiose architectural pretensions is useless for most practical purposes. It is thus a fitting contrast to the Manchester businessmen's Free Trade Hall, eminently practicable but decidedly plain.

185. Liberal Review, 12th March 1881.
186. The Porcupine, Vol 13 (1871), 297.
187. G. Melly, op.cit, 85, 142.
188. See A.H. Taylor in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 107 (1955), 121f.
189. B.G. Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour (1893), 43f.
190. Rathbone Papers, ii, 1, 155.
191. Rathbone Papers, ii, 1, 79.
192. Rathbone Papers, ii, 1, 80-134.
193. Rathbone Papers, ii, 1, 56.
194. See The Inquirer, 19th May 1962.
195. C.A. Piper, op.cit, 35f.
196. It is remarkable that two of the most bizzare of early English Socialist pioneers, John Trevor and Victor Grayson, passed from an evangelical background through the medium of this Liverpool Unitarian missionary enterprise into radical politics.
197. Details of these organizations may be found in the Liverpool Unitarian Annual, a publication which ran from 1892 to 1895.
198. G.G. Armstrong, R.A. Armstrong, A. Memoir (1906) has no reference to this incident which aroused great interest in the local press at the time.
199. A. Holt, A Ministry to the Poor, 93f.
200. H.D. Roberts, op.cit, 463-69.
201. Toxteth Park Chapel is strictly outside the scope of this History but as it was closely connected with the two Liverpool churches in many ways, it is worth noting that it too by the 1890s had declined almost to extinction - see a letter of J.H. Thom to W. Rathbone in Rathbone Papers, xiii, 1, 57.
202. D.N.B. entry; The Inquirer, 2nd May 1885; Christian Life, 25th April 1885.
203. H.D. Roberts, op.cit, 450.
204. E.M. Geldart, Two Discourses (1885), 23.
205. The Renshaw Street chapel records of this time testify to this movement within the local Unitarian community.
206. The Inquirer, 22nd Dec. 1877. Bright, who was no literary tiro, framed his letter with great skill. The subsequent replies of Martineau and Thom did little to resolve his dilemma and only in some sense added to the confusion.
207. H.D. Roberts, op.cit, 449. Geldart had his earnest supporters, such as the Higginsons, who moved with him to Croydon in 1878. He committed suicide in 1885.
208. Liverpool Review, 13th Oct. 1883; Discourses of the Late C.J. Perry ed. R.A. Armstrong (1884).

209. G.G. Armstrong, op.cit, 89. This third argument is more satisfactorily defined by the Liverpool Daily Post of 3rd Jan. 1900 as 'the sense ; of beauty through which man recognizes God by immediate intuition as Love'.
210. G.G. Armstrong, op.cit, 90f.
211. See 'The Minister as Citizen' in Liverpool Unitarian Annual for 1893.
212. It is easy also to overlook some very interesting sidelights of his career, his authorship for example of the pamphlet 'Overstrain In Education' (1886) which Samuel Smith distributed among his fellow M.Ps, and is said to have dealt the final blow to the Payment-By-Results system.
213. L.P. Jacks, Confessions of an Octogenarian (1942), 141.
214. Rathbone Papers, 1X 7.6.
215. See R.P. Jones in T.U.H.S., Vol. 11, 77f.
216. A. Holt, Walking Together, 250-251.
217. A. Holt, A Ministry to the Poor, 79.
218. Ibidem, 91 Jones clung so tenaciously to this spirit that in 1908 he declared himself opposed to the government's Old Age Pensions scheme, as the contributory element was underplayed, and the proposals did nothing to reward the thrifty or punish the feckless.
219. A.C. Piper, op.cit, 40f.
220. See S. and B. Webb, Our Partnership (1948 edition), 162.
221. A.H. John, op.cit, 166.
222. Ibidem, 164.
223. A.H. Hyde, op.cit, 54, 168.
224. S. Marriner, op.cit, 118.
225. Ibidem, 130f.
226. W.E. Orchard, op.cit, 43f.
227. The Inquirer, 21st March 1903.
228. Liverpool Unitarian Annual for 1894. See also an undated letter of J.H. Thom to William Rathbone VI (Rathbone Papers, X111, 1, 75): 'it is a waste of time to build new chapels if we cannot put strong and richly furnished ministers into their pulpits'.
229. The presnace of these ladies points to another factor in the break-up of the Liverpool Unitarian community, the tendency of the men to reside either in the country or to be drawn into the commercial vortex of London, and thus to cut themselves off from their native city. In the 1920s Lord Woolton, himself a Liverpool Unitarian who had migrated in this way, used often to refer to this circumstance when commenting on the decline of a sense of civic responsibility among English middle-class families. There was no William Rathbone VII to take his place in the proud family dynasty for the reason that the eldest son of William VI removed to London and married a Roman Catholic. The only remaining Rathbone prominent in Liverpool municipal affairs is an Anglican and a Conservative.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TEN

NOTES

1. See further Liverpool Review, 18th May 1889.
2. See ante, chapter one.
3. Jacobinism in Liverpool was wholly a middle-class protest movement. No branch of the London Corresponding Society was ever founded among the town's loyalist workpeople.
4. See Liverpool Bulletin, Vol. 9 (1961), 44.
5. Roscoe who here expresses his indebtedness to Paine and Mary Woolstonecraft was an admirer of Vergniaud and the Brissotins; Currie more cautiously favoured Lafayette and the Feuillants - H. Roscoe, Life of William Roscoe (1833), 110: Liverpool Bulletin, Vol. 9 (1961), 41.
6. Shepherd's pen was dipped in vitriol. He had however an uncanny knack of keeping out of trouble - Anon, Selections from the early letters of William Shepherd (1835), 49, 61. Such good fortune did not attend his assistant teacher, Thomas Lloyd, who for a seditious song was lodged in gaol and afterwards found his health permanently impaired - E. Axon, Memorials of the Nickolson Family (1928), 112.
7. T. Fletcher, Autobiographical Reminiscences (1893), 69.
8. Nonetheless Wilberforce considered Currie's attack on Pitt most unfair - R.D. Thornton, James Currie and Robert Burns (1963), 213.
9. See G. Williams, The Liverpool Privateers (1897), 572 f, 609 f for these events.
10. It was for this group that Yates produced his epoch-making anti-slavery sermon of the same year - Monthly Repository, Vol. 22 (1827), 68.
11. E. Rathbone, Records of the Rathbones of Liverpool (1913), 90.
12. Currie Papers (L.R.O.), 2nd April 1792.
13. Roscoe Papers (L.R.O.), 239, 241, 21st January 1787, 7th February 1787.
14. Holt and Gregson Papers (L.R.O.), Vol. 50.
15. A. Aspinall, The Early English Trade Unions (1949), 2.
16. Gore's Liverpool Advertiser, 14th January 1790.
17. R.D. Thornton, op. cit., 202.
18. E. Rathbone, Records, 96.
19. J.A. Picton, Memorials of Liverpool (1875), Vol. I, 220 f.
20. Rathbone Papers, II, 162 (letter of 23rd December 1792).
21. Rathbone Papers, II, 1. 162.
22. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 121. A copy of this address survives in the L.R.

23. Shepherd's Introduction to the Poems of Edward Rushton.
24. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 128. An amusing verse account of the crisis of November 1792 is to be found in the Rathbone family Scrapbook - Rathbone Papers, XIX. 1.
25. Monthly Repository, Vol. 4 (1809), 230.
26. Rathbone Papers, II, 1. 163.
27. E. Rathbone, Records, 107.
28. W.W. Currie, Memoirs of James Currie (1831), Vol. I, 217.
29. Ibidem, Vol. I, 177.
30. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 110.
31. Rathbone Papers; William Rathbone IV's Scrapbook, 51.
32. Rathbone Papers, II. 1. 146, 151.
33. B.D. White, The Corporation of Liverpool (1951), 33.
34. See A. de Curzon, Dr. James Currie and the French Prisoners of War in Liverpool (1926). Currie was nevertheless given the freedom of the town in 1802, largely on account of his efforts to rebuild the defences of the town against a possible French attack.
35. It was suggested at the time that indirectly his wealth was derived from the slave trade, but the same could be said of every propertied man in Liverpool.
36. See ante, chapter nine.
37. See ante, chapter 8; F.E. Hyde in Ec. H.R., N.S. Vol. 8 (1955), The Liverpool Cotton Broker and the rise of the Liverpool cotton market.
38. R.V. Holt, The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress (1952), 60.
39. General Gascoyne twice achieved notoriety; in 1812 because he happened to have arrested Perceval's assassin, and in 1831 when he moved the rejection of the Reform Bill. Tarleton was even less conspicuous.
40. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 53, 44.
41. Ibidem, 73.
42. Squib Book of the Liverpool election of 1802, 33.
43. Holt and Gregson, Vol. 36, 43.
44. Squib Book, 19. The reference is to Dr. Crompton.
45. J.A. Picton, op. cit., Vol. I, 296.
46. Lord Sefton's reasons for refusal were thus explained by a Tory pamphleteer : To himself thus he argued: Those Whiggish Dissenters will afterwards prove my eternal tormentors.

In Kirby and Croxteth they'll take their diversions,
And to please them at last I must give my reversions.

47. John Adams' Squib Book of the 1806 Liverpool election, 62.
48. Roscoe Papers, 2976.
49. Roscoe Papers, 2975, 319, 3118.
50. Roscoe Papers, 1745, 1187, 2090, 2091. Wright and Cruikshank's Account of the 1806 election, viii.
51. John Adams, op. cit., 17.
52. Jones' and Wright's History of the 1806 election, 3.
53. C.N. Parkinson, The Trade Winds (1948), 258.
54. Jones and Wright, op. cit., 43.
55. J. Adams, op. cit., 67.
56. F. Thistlethwaite, The Anglo-American Connection In the Early Nineteenth Century (1959), 79, 80. For the close identification of the Unitarian-Quaker business-men with the America interest, see S.G. Checkland in Journal of Economic History, Vol. 18 (1958). 145.
57. Jones and Wright, op. cit., 7.
58. J. Adams, op. cit., 45, 47.
59. Jones and Wright, op. cit., 22.
60. Ibidem, 43.
61. Roscoe Papers, 2775.
62. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 361.
63. Roscoe Papers, 1087, 3054.
64. Roscoe Papers, 3101.
65. Roscoe Papers, 3058, 3059, 3060.
66. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 383.
67. Ibidem, 391.
68. E. Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (1954), 63.
69. Roscoe Papers, 1748, 3069.
70. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 394.
71. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 41, 11, 18, 153.
72. H. Roscoe, op. cit., 407 f.
73. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 41, 146.
74. Roscoe Papers, 1190, 1191.
75. See Shepherd Papers, Vol. 9, passim.
76. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 9, 27, 33, 35.
77. Roscoe Papers, 765. See also The Imperial Magazine, Vol. 3, 48.
78. E. Axon, op. cit., 76.
79. Rathbone Papers, V. 1. 8.
80. Rathbone Papers, II, 1. 170.

81. Rathbone Papers, *ibidem*.
82. Roscoe Papers, 3061.
83. Roscoe Papers, 476-480.
84. Roscoe Papers, 1778.
85. Roscoe Papers, 1780.
86. Roscoe Papers, 2097.
87. Liverpool Mercury 15th May 1812. The Mercury had recently been founded to voice the discontents of the aggrieved mercantile classes.
88. C.W. New, Life of Lord Brougham, Vol. I (1961), 70 f.
89. G.S. Veitch, Huskisson and Liverpool (1928), 19.
90. Addresses etc. of the 1812 election, 35, 65.
91. This correspondence is chiefly remarkable for the fawning tone which he adopted towards the Earl of Sefton, and even to the Unitarian intellectuals - E. Rathbone, *op. cit.*, 73; Creevy Papers ed. J. Gore (1963), 961.
92. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 30, 48.
93. Addresses etc. of the 1812 election, 21.
94. *Ibidem*, 74.
95. *Ibidem*, 95.
96. See W.O. Henderson in *Economica* Vol. 13 (1933), 473 f.
97. J.A. Picton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 390 f. There were about 20,000 persons in receipt of poor relief in Liverpool at this time.
98. See A.J. Yates, A Letter on the Distress of the Country (1817), for an example of this radical thinking.
99. A.H. John, A Liverpool Merchant House (1959), 18.
100. T. Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 125 f.
101. The Tory clubs were the Backbone, Canning, Pitt and True Blue. See B. Whittingham-Jones in T.H.S.L.C. Vol. 111 and her *mss.* article on the Liverpool political clubs in L.R.O.
102. Liverpool Mercury, 11th December 1818.
103. Liverpool Albion, 1st January 1877.
104. S.A.T. Yates, Memorials of the Family of the Rev. John Yates (1891), 95. Yates was also referred to as 'the little devil who pinches all the wenches up at Tom Booth's wall'-Squib Book of the 1816 Liverpool election, 41.
105. J.A. Picton, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 377.
106. Squib Book of the 1816 election, 46.
107. *Ibidem*, 29.

108. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 47, v.
109. Squib Book of the 1818 Liverpool election, 36.
110. Ibidem, 46.
111. E. Rathbone, op. cit., 180.
112. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 4, 65.
113. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 35, 19, 33, 59, 64.
114. See the article by D. Paterson in T.U.H.S., Vol. 6, 29 f. See also ante, chapter four and Wright's Letter addressed to Mr. T. Raffles (1817).
115. T. Fletcher, op. cit., 123; Liverpool Mercury, 24th November 1820.
116. Liverpool Courier, 29th November 1820.
117. Holt and Gregson Papers, Vol. 6, 262 f. This was the first time such an event had occurred in Liverpool.
118. See ante, chapter 9.
119. See G.S. Veitch, The Struggle for the Liverpool-Manchester Railway (1930).
120. See Shepherd's Speech in honour of the Irish Catholic Delegates to Parliament (1825), in which he declares that the English Presbyterians support them to a man - Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 50.
121. G.S. Veitch, op. cit., 24.
122. Liverpool Mercury, 16th June 1826.
123. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 4, 87.
124. Liverpool Mercury, 6th August 1830.
125. T. Fletcher, op. cit., 151-157.
126. H.D. Roberts, Hope Street Church (1909), 341.
127. See D.B. Davis in Journal of Negro History, Vol. 46 (1961), 241 f.
128. It is still a moot point whether Cropper's ideals were altruistic or shot through with self-interest. Dr. Williams (Capitalism and Slavery, 186-187) naturally prefers the former interpretation, though L.J. Ragatz, Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean (1928) 435 f, argues convincingly for the latter.
129. Poll Book of the Liverpool November 1830 election, introduction.
130. Squib Book of the Liverpool election of November 1830, 27.
131. Poll Book, xxxv. Liverpool Mercury, 15th December 1855.
132. Rathbone Papers. Family Scrapbook, xix. 1.
133. Shepherd saw in the Reform Bill "the triumph of the free voices of that respectable and intelligent body, the merchants at large of the town of Liverpool" - Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 57.

134. Poll Book of the Liverpool election of December 1832, iv, v.
135. Squib Book of the Liverpool election of December 1832, 51.
136. Ibidem, 100.
137. Ibidem, 107.
138. N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel (1953), 155.
139. Rathbone Papers, V. 3. 3.
140. E. Rathbone, Records, 190 f.
141. L.R.O. Letter of E.B. Pusey, dated 25th April 1834.
142. See ante, chapters 3 and 4.
143. Report of the Commission of Enquiry (1835), 479. Fletcher naturally objected to Liverpool being placed in the power of 'an entirely new set of people, most of them strangers from other parts of the country' - Autobiography, 129.
144. E. Rathbone, Records, 202. Rathbone was later elected chairman by the delegates of provincial towns assembled in London for the purpose of petitioning parliament - Rathbone Papers, V. 3. 4.
145. Poll Book of the Liverpool Election of 1835.
146. Liverpool Mercury, 5th June 1835.
147. Liverpool Mercury, 18th September 1835.
148. Liverpool Mercury, 11th December 1835.
149. Liverpool Mercury, 20th November 1835.
150. Liverpool Standard, 25th November 1835.
151. Rathbone Papers, xix. 1.
152. B.D. White, op. cit., 199.
153. J. Murphy, The Religious Problem in English Education (1959).
154. Wesleyan 2957, Presbyterian 358, Unitarian 739, Friends 540, Baptist 539, Congregational 1459, Welsh 710.
155. Figures for baptisms in the town's churches for the year 1833 given in the Mercury for 19th September 1834 revealed a more alarming situation. Church of England 5654, Roman Catholic 2232, Dissenters 552. The significance of these statistics was however less obvious than those for school attendances.
156. N. Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics (1965), 80 f.
157. See Kelly's Letter to the Rev. David James (1840).
158. Anon, The Great Conservative Triumph (1837), 27.
159. J. Murphy, op. cit., 223.
160. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 83.

161. "I prefer gentlemen of landed property and liberal sentiments, not manufacturers, or those concerned in a brewery or deficient in education" - Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 55.
162. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 4, 143-146.
163. W. Shepherd, Help! Help! The Church in Danger (1836). Shepherd hardly calmed troubled waters by referring to the two leading Anglican Evangelicals as a 'jackdaw' and an 'adulterer'.
164. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 5, 83.
165. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 71.
166. Liverpool Mercury, 15th July, 1836.
167. Liverpool Mercury, 25th October 1839.
168. The Spectator, 11th October 1828.
169. "Well, William", remarked a friend on this occasion, "you have crossed the Rubicon" - Rathbone Papers, V. 3. 93.
170. Liverpool Mercury, 3rd May 1837.
171. H.M. Walmsley, Life of Sir Joshua Walmsley (1879), 94.
172. "The Ignorance of the constituency as to what are their true interests, Bigotry and Intimidation", Rathbone declared, "had at last won the day" - Rathbone Papers, XIX. 1.
173. See the Moral Code of the New Moral World (1840).
174. See T.H.S.L.C., Vols. 109 (1957), 113 (1961) ; W.H.G. Armytage, Heavens Below (1961), 270.
175. The Liverpool branch of the League was continued after 1842 as the Anti-Monopoly Association. Its arguments had little relevance to and were not appreciated by the inhabitants of Liverpool.
176. Liverpool Mercury, 9th July 1850.
177. This programme caused Mr. Henry Booth to attack it bitterly in a pamphlet of 1860 entitled 'Taxation Direct and Indirect'. Booth argued that the position of the upper middle classes on whose continuin prosperity the cultural, social and economic strength of the nation depended would be jeopardized by its 'single direct tax' proposals.
178. Liverpool Mercury, 31st March 1886.
179. Liverpool Mercury, 30th May 1848.
180. The Porcupine, Vol. 6, 220.
181. See E.F. Gillespie, Labour and Politics in England (1927), 157; W.N. Calkins, A Victorian Free Trade Lobby in Ec. H.R., N.S. Vol. 13 (1961), 90 f.
182. Liverpool Mercury, 20th June 1848; 25th June 1850.

183. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 77.
184. T. Burke, A Catholic History of Liverpool (1910), 74.
185. Rathbone Papers, V. 3. 9; E. Rathbone, op. cit., 222.
186. R. V. Holt, op. cit., 264.
187. Rathbone Papers, V. 1. 29, 81-87.
188. T. Burke, op. cit., 114, 133.
189. J. A. Picton, op. cit., Vol. 2, 186 f.
190. Liverpool Mercury, 29th September 1848, 19th February 1850.
191. Shepherd however became more easily alarmed by the labouring classes the older he grew. In 1846 he was terrified by encountering a radical assemblage of 'four thousand peasants' - Shepherd Papers, Vol. 4, 117.
192. Sir Howard Douglas replaced Cresswell, who had been appointed a Judge, without a contest in 1842.
193. Liverpool Mercury, 14th April 1843.
194. Liverpool Albion, 13th March, 1845.
195. Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 87, 91.
196. Liverpool Mercury, 11th, 18th April; Liverpool Albion 25th April 1845; Shepherd Papers Vol. 7, 91.
197. C. Whibley, Lord John Manners and his Friends (1925), Vol. I, 113 f.
198. R.G. Cowherd, The Politics of English Dissent (1956), 161 f; N. Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction, 98-108.
199. The dying Shepherd roused himself to warn Dissenters against this latest ruse of the McNeilites, 'the refuse of a party which has become ashamed of them' - Shepherd Papers, Vol. 7, 93, 95.
200. Liverpool Mercury, 16th, 20th July 1847.
201. Liverpool Mercury, 3rd August 1847.
202. Rathbone Papers, IX, 7. 26.
203. Rathbone Papers, V. 1. 54.
204. B.D. White, op. cit., 88.
205. Liverpool Mercury, 28th April 1854.
206. A Brief Memoir of George Holt Esq. (1862), passim.
207. J.A. Picton, Life of Sir J. Picton (1891), 257 f; B.D. White, op. cit 79-81; Liverpool Courier, 6th August 1914. Picton had his revenge on the Lace family whom he excluded from his history of Liverpool.
208. E. Rathbone, op. cit., 140 f.

NOTES ON CHAPTER ELEVEN

NOTES

1. G. Melly, *Recollections of Sixty Years* (1893), 142.
2. G. Melly, *Stray Leaves* (1895), Vol. 1, 5; Vol. 2, 10; Vol. 7, 3: If only the working man would think of all the misery living in filth brings him, 'he would have the will to afford a healthy home, and where there's a will, there's a way'.
3. *The Porcupine*, Vol. 1, 104; Vol. 10, 336, 346, 366, 503.
4. T.H.S.L.C. Vol. 107; H. Taylor on Politics In Famine-Stricken Preston.
5. *Porcupine*, Vol. 6, 140.
6. *Ibidem*, Vol. 9, 476.
7. *Ibidem*, Vol. 4, 205, 228; Vol. 5, 143, 201; Vol. 8, 88.
8. T. Burke, *op. cit.*, 147.
9. Rathbone Papers, ix. 2; H.A. Whitting, Alfred Booth (1917), 160; *Porcupine*, Vol. 8, 116.
10. T.S. & M. Simey, *op. cit.*, 39.
11. Rathbone Papers, xi. 2.
12. E.R. Rathbone, *op. cit.*, 201.
13. H.A. Whitting, *op. cit.*, 157; A.H. John, *op. cit.*, 27.
14. The machinations of the Licensed Victuallers Association had been exposed in 1862 by Mr. H. Booth in one of his brilliantly worded pamphlets.
15. P.T. Winskill and J. Thomas, *Temperance Movement in Liverpool* (1887), *passim*.
16. W. Rathbone, *The Danger of Democratic Reaction* (1863).
17. Rathbone Papers, ix. 7. 178; ix. 7. 22, 65.
18. Rathbone Papers, ix. 2. Letter of 26th June 1866.
19. *The Inquirer*, 15th February 1868.
20. *Porcupine*, Vol. 8, 270; G. Melly, *Recollections*, 15; for Jones, see *Révue Occidentale*, Vol. 9 (1882).
21. Nevertheless Mr. George Howell's offers of assistance were to cause Rathbone some embarrassment - see R. Harrison, *Before the Socialists* (1965), 188.
22. It was during this campaign that Mr. Robertson Gladstone walked out of church every time a well-known Tory parson got up into the pulpit with the intention of criticising his brother's policies - J. Hoult, *History of West Derby* (1913), 4; see also P. Searby in T.H.S.L.C., Vol. 111; Gladstone in the West Derby Hundred.

23. The Porcupine also detested him. The Renshaw Street faction, the journal declared *à propos* the local Liberal party, was responsible for the pompous didacticism and superior attitudes of its leading spokesmen. 'It has done more harm to the Liberal party than good. Your sect is not as other men. Its modes of thought are different and its peculiarities are carried into every department of life' - Porcupine, Vol. 19, 42.
24. Porcupine, Vol. 16, 243; Liverpool Review, July 4th 1885.
25. B.G. Orchard, Liverpool Exchange Portrait Gallery, 1st Series (1884), 27f; Liverpool Review 14th January 1882, 15th March 1884; Liverpool Daily Post, 14th July 1890.
26. G. Melly, Recollections, 137.
27. G. Melly, Stray Leaves, Vol. 3, 23. Previous to Melly's, similar surveys of education in Liverpool had been carried out by the Rev. A. Hume in 1853 and by the Town Council in 1867.
28. A.H. John, op. cit., 40.
29. Rathbone Papers, xiii, 1. 42.
30. The Inquirer, 9th October 1869.
31. T. Burke, op. cit., 184.
32. Liverpool Mercury, 25th January, 1st February 1872.
33. B.D. White, op. cit., 146 f.
34. Roman Catholic representation rose eventually to 6, and Nonconformist and Anglican were reduced for a time by one each. William Oulton and S.G. Rathbone in 1873 polled more than any Anglican candidate, while in 1885 Rathbone actually headed the list over all six Catholic candidates who nearly always occupied the first half dozen placed. In 1888 however Rathbone came eighth in the list, Miss A.J. Davies, a particularly useful Nonconformist member of the Board 14th, Oulton 15th, whilst T.C. Ryley, the Quaker educationalist, narrowly missed election by coming 16th. Three years later he moved up to 15th place, and Nonconformist representation was again restored to four. It was down to three again in 1894, Oulton, Miss Davies and Ryley occupying 13th, 14th and 15th places. In 1897 however Miss Davies who had done very valuable work headed the entire list, whilst R.G. Hough who took Oulton's place came 12th. Rathbone's place had already been filled by Joshua Sing, a Baptist, and on Miss Davies' death a little later Miss Florence Melly succeeded as the sole woman representative on the Board.
35. Liverpool Mercury, 12th December 1870.
36. See S.M. Ingham in Journal of Religious History, Vol. 3, 38 f.

37. See ante chapter 4.
38. Liverpool Daily Post, 22nd January 1873.
39. Liverpool Daily Post, 29th January 1873.
40. Liverpool Daily Post, 1st February 1873.
41. Liverpool Daily Post, 3rd February 1873.
42. The Liverpool result can hardly however be described as 'freakish', as it is by J.P.D. Dunbabin in E.H.R., Vol. 71 (1966), 86.
43. Liverpool Courier, Daily Post, 10th February 1873.
44. Rathbone Papers, ix. 2., passim.
45. Rathbone Papers, ix. 2. 16th March 1872.
46. Liverpool Mercury, 17th April 1886.
47. E. Rathbone, op. cit., 221 f.
48. Liverpool Daily Post, 28th January 1874.
49. T. Burke, op. cit., 210-214.
50. Liverpool Daily Post, 30th January 1874.
51. Liverpool Daily Post, 7th February 1874.
52. Liverpool Review, 12th March 1881; Porcupine, 17th October 1896; Daily Post, 10th November 1892.
53. Liverpool Citizen, 5th September 1888.
54. R.H. Lundie, Alexander Balfour (1895), 85 f.
55. S. Smith, My Life Work (1902), 129; P.T. Winskill and J. Thomas, op. cit., 81.
56. S. Smith, op. cit., 131.
57. Anon. In Memoriam R.H. Lundie (n.d.), 83; Porcupine, 17th April 1886.
58. Rathbone Papers, ix. 3. 30th July 1878.
59. Liverpool Review, 17th January; Daily Post, 14th, 15th, 16th January 1880.
60. Rathbone Papers, ix. 3. 5th May 1880. Lord Hartington seems to have played some part in this discreditable transaction - ibidem, ix. 7. 142.
61. Liverpool Mercury, 9th April 1880; Rathbone Papers, ix. 3. 27th February 1880; his friend, the Bishop of Peterborough, expressed his 'contempt and disgust' at the circumstances of Rathbone's rejection - ix. 7. 165.
62. Liverpool Courier, 18th March 1880.
63. See Liverpool Review, 10th April 1880.
64. Rathbone Papers, ix. 7. 87.
65. Ibidem, ix. 3. Undated letter.
66. Liverpool Review, 24th July - 14th August 1880.
67. Liverpool Review, 17th June, 23rd September, 28th October, 1882.

68. S. Smith, op. cit., 136.
69. Liverpool Mercury, 25th November - 2nd December 1882; B.G. Orchard, op. cit., article on 'Sam Lang'.
70. Liverpool Review, 2nd December 1882.
71. Contemporary Review, Vol. 43, 294 f.
72. S. Smith, op. cit., 140 f; Liverpool Review, 6th January 1883.
73. The circumstances of Samuelson's nomination are curious. He seems to have been chosen by the Liverpool Industrial Union before the Kirkdale Liberal Association was officially constituted. Many Liberals, including even Oulton, were annoyed by this, disliked his extreme radicalism which extended even to women's suffrage, and referred to him unkindly as an 'uninvited intruder' - Liverpool Review, 24th January, 14th February, 10th October, 1885.
74. Liverpool Review, 12th December 1885.
75. Liverpool Review, 12th June 1886.
76. See ante, chapter 3.
77. Liverpool Daily Post, Mercury, 7th July - 10th July 1886.
78. Liverpool Review, 16th October 1886.
79. Liverpool Daily Post, 28th January 1887.
80. For these successes, see Liverpool Courier, 14th November 1892.
81. S. Smith, op. cit., 293.
82. Liverpool Daily Post, 11th June ; 9th July 1892.
83. R.A. Armstrong, Two Years Ago and Now (1892), 3.
84. Minute Book of Pembroke Chapel, November 1892 entry.
85. See Liverpool Review, 3rd May 1902, for an account of the Reform Council's achievements.
86. Porcupine, 17th October 1896.
87. See E.S. Turner, Roads to Ruin (1950), 127.
88. Liverpool Daily Post, 12th January ; 20th January 1893.
89. T.W.M. Lund, The Ideal Citizen (1895), 18.
90. Porcupine, 2nd September 1893; 21st November 1896.
91. See Porcupine, 26th September 1914, and Our Empire, 17th November 1894, for a spirited denunciation of Watts.
92. R.A. Armstrong, op. cit., 110 f.
93. Liverpool Pulpit, 1895, 100 f.
94. Liverpool Review, 29th June 1895.
95. Liverpool Daily Post, 5th July 1895.

96. Liverpool Daily Post, 26th, 27th July 1895.
97. Liverpool Review, 27th July 1895.
98. B.D. White, op. cit., 190; R.B. Whittingham-Jones, Liverpool Politics (1936), 44.
99. See Porcupine 27th June, 17th October 1896 for an assessment of the Liverpool Liberal leadership at this time.
100. Liverpool Daily Post, 4th, 5th, 6th November 1897.
101. Crosfield and Samuel Smith gave guarded support, Thomas Snape, the president of the Liverpool Peace Society, unqualified approval, to the efforts of the Unitarian Pro-Boers.
102. Liverpool Courier, 15th January 1900.
103. Liverpool Mercury, 8th February 1900.
104. Liverpool Review, 13th January 1900.
105. Liverpool Review, 14th October 1899.
106. Evans was the very embodiment of the conciliatory spirit, but was prepared, when occasion demanded it, to attack the Pro-Boers as disruptionists - Liverpool Review, 29th December 1900. Holt, whose son was fighting in South Africa, was anxious to avoid and rebut the imputation of being a Pro-Boer - see Liverpool Mercury, 10th October 1901.
107. Liverpool Mercury, 31st December 1901.
108. Liverpool Review, 8th June, 23rd September 1901.
109. H.R. Rathbone, A Memoir (1931), 11; Rathbone Papers, ix. 5. 4.
110. Rathbone Papers, xix. 63. Letter of 2nd December 1902.
111. Rathbone Papers, ix. 7. 204.
112. Liverpool Courier, 28th January 1900.
113. R.A. Armstrong, op. cit., 111, 113.
114. Liverpool Courier, 6th February 1900.
115. Liverpool Courier, 31st May 1900.
116. Liverpool Review, 27th January 1900.
117. Liverpool Review, 24th March 1900. See also The Times, 16th March 1900.
118. Liverpool Daily Post, 31st October 1900.
119. Liverpool Review, 5th October 1901.
120. Liverpool Daily Post, 6th January 1902.
121. Liverpool Daily Post, 8th-23rd October 1902.
122. Liverpool Daily Post, 1st November 1902.
123. Liverpool Review, 11th October - 13th December 1902.
124. Liverpool Review, 23rd, 30th May 1903.

125. Liverpool Echo, 7th January 1903.
126. Liverpool Daily Post, 8th January 1906.
127. Liverpool Daily Post, 22nd December 1905.
128. Liverpool Daily Post, 6th January 1906.
129. Liverpool Courier, 18th December 1905; Daily Post 4th January 1906.
130. Liverpool Daily Post, 10th January 1906.
131. Liverpool Daily Post, 18th January 1906.
132. Exchange and Abercromby reverted to the Tories in the first General Election of 1910, thus eliminating Liberal representation in Liverpool once again.
133. B.D. White, op. cit., 188.
134. H.R. Rathbone, A Memoir (1931), 14.
135. Porcupine, 31st October 1914.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWELVE

Notes

1. C.W. Dugmore, Ecclesiastical History No Soft Option (1959), 5.
2. Neither of these concepts quite corresponds to the 'macrosociology' and 'microsociology' of Professor Stark's celebrated definition.
3. L.E. Elliot-Binns, English Thought 1860-1900 (1956), 2.
4. J.N. Figgis, Civilization at the Crossroads (1912), 33.
5. See V.A. Demant, Religion and the Decline of Capitalism (1949), 39; A.D. Lindsay, Christianity and Economics (1930), passim.
6. E.C. Rust, Towards a Theological Understanding of History (1963).
7. Mathew Arnold of course died in the sylvan peace of Dingle Bank, the family home of his friends, the Croppers. This fact in itself is a curious commentary on the main thesis of 'Culture and Anarchy'.
8. R.C. Cobb in Bulletin de la Societ  d'histoire moderne, s rie 3, no. 14, Vol. 59 (1960), 2.
9. A. Briggs in The Listener, 27th February, 1964.

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Ian Sellers

Liverpool non-conformity,

1786-1914.

ABSTRACT

Thesis Ph.D.
1969.

'Liverpool Nonconformity, 1786-1914' endeavours to trace the fortunes of all the Protestant Dissenting denominations, except the Welsh-speaking congregations, during the period of rapid urban expansion covered by these years. Chapter One surveys the Liverpool of 1786 and describes the various Nonconformist congregations established within the town by that date. Chapter Two explores the most vital emphasis which nearly all denominations shared, and which reacted on them in different ways: home evangelism and the accompanying phenomenon of revivalism. Early Methodist itinerancy, the Town Mission, the 1859, Moody-Sankey, Salvation Army and Torrey-Alexander missions are surveyed, and the results of this endeavour evaluated in the light of the censuses of 1851, 1881, 1891, 1902 and 1912. Chapters Three and Four describe the rapid progress of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations in the period under review: the changing theological emphases, relations between the different churches and groups of churches, rates of expansion and social composition of the two denominations are the predominant themes. Chapter Five which has given rise to particular difficulties discusses the Baptists: the same general pattern is followed here, but the extreme individualism and delayed denominational self-consciousness of the Baptists necessitates a more analytical and less obviously chronological approach, especially in the later Victorian period. Chapter Six (The Wesleyans) has proved hardly less intractable. Here the record of individual church building has been subordinated to considerations of circuit strategy, and both factors to the overriding significance of the social composition of nineteenth century Wesleyanism. The early factionalism and religious and political conservatism of the Connexion are also stressed. Chapter Seven (The Methodist Sects) is of minor importance in view of their relative insignificance in Liverpool life. Chapter Eight deals with various lesser Dissenting bodies, including the Quakers, Mormons, Churches of Christ and Bretheren, most of which seem similarly uninfluential. Chapter Nine deals with the numerically small but socially significant Dissenting élite, the Unitarians. Particular attention is paid in this long chapter to the changing theological attitudes and constantly shifting social basis of the local Unitarian churches; the impact of their leading families and leading divines on the charitable, educational and economic scene is stressed, while their distinctive political role is treated

separately in Chapters Ten and Eleven.

These penultimate chapters treat of local Dissenters and Liverpool politics during the period. Care has been taken not to overstress the Dissenting factor, but no apology is made for writing the history of Liverpool Liberalism in the nineteenth century from the standpoint of the Unitarian élite who tried to monopolise political leadership with occasional and usually unhelpful interventions by the Baptists, Wesleyans and Presbyterians. Much space is devoted to the only two periods, 1835-41 and 1892-5, when the Liberals controlled the Council Chamber, and the equally fleeting occasions when a local Dissenter was returned to Westminster. The intervening years of unrelieved political opposition and internal fractiousness are not however neglected. A concluding chapter assesses favourably the Nonconformist contribution to Victorian Liverpool. Notes, a bibliography and a map are appended to the thesis.

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